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Framed in the snow was a human face—the face of a young girl.

## A STRANGE GIRL: A New England Love Story.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

Author of the "Wolf Demon," "Overland Kit," "Red Mazeppa," "Witches of New York," etc.

### CHAPTER I.

#### "LET ME DIE!"

A BITTERLY cold evening in the month of December, the year 1870.

A driving snow-storm accompanied by a north-east gale had set in early in the morning, and at the time of which we write—seven in the evening—full eight inches of snow covered in the streets and house-tops of the city of Boston.

The night was dark as pitch; the lighted gas flaring from the street lamps, seemed only to "make the darkness visible."

Few pedestrians were in the streets. Already the shops had begun to put up their shutters, and the good folks, snugly housed, and circling round their fires, began to speculate about the prospects for a hard winter.

Through the drifted snow, piled here and there in great heaps, in Causeway street, came a short, stoutly-built woman, all muffled up, and carrying a large basket on her arm. A little yellow dog, with sharp ears and a stumpy tail, carried straight up over his back, followed the woman.

Stumbling through the snow-drifts and resolutely facing the biting blast, that howled and raged around her as if to pluck the cloak from her shoulders, the woman came slowly along.

The lights streaming from the Eastern depot met her eyes.

"Bress de Lor!" she muttered, in accents that plainly betrayed her to be of the

dusky race of Ham; "dere's dat depot fo' sure. By golly! dis yere ole woman's tank-ful!"

"Bow-wow!" said the dog, darting suddenly from the track in the snow left by the old woman's footsteps, and approaching a snow-drift piled in a corner against the side of a house.

"W'at's de matter wid you?" growled the old woman, angrily, pausing to look after the dog.

"Bow-yow-yow!" cried the dog, sharply, and each particular hair on his body seemed to stand on end.

"You good-for-nothin' Pete, w'at's de matter wid ye? I speck's you want fur to make me catch my deff of cold in dis yere wind."

The dog barked again and longer than before; then he began to root with his nose in the snow-bank; he called upon his paws to assist his nose, and began to scratch and dig with all his might.

"Dat ki-yoodle mad for sure!" muttered the negress, approaching cautiously, plowing her way through the deep snow.

As the old woman approached, the dog paused suddenly, having made quite a hole in the light snow, lifted his snout and gave vent to a long and plaintive howl.

"Bress de Lor!" cried the negress, in affright, "dat dog howls as if dere was somebody dead."

The dog jumped to one side as his mistress approached, and began sniffing with his nose in the hole which he had made.

The old woman acted with caution; the night was dark, yet she could plainly distinguish the dark cavity in the snow. The action of the dog, unaccountable to her, had awakened a fear that she was about to behold something dreadful, and she was now disappointed.

Framed in the snow was a human face—the face of a young girl. The long hair, black as night, flowing loosely down, fringed in the pale face from whence the ruddy blood had fled. That face was so beautiful with its clear, transparent skin, white as the polished marble, its regular outlines and perfect proportions, that the old woman, in her simple way, thought at first she looked upon an angel who had strayed from heaven to earth, riding upon the bosom of the snow-cloud, rather than on a mortal like herself.

The negress stood like one transfixed; but the dog, being an animal, and therefore not given to human weakness, gave another howl, and then commenced to lick the face of the beautiful girl who lay in her bridal dress of snow, waiting for the coming groom, grim Death.

Tenderly the rough tongue of the dog lapped away the snow-flakes from the girl's face.

Coming to her senses at last, the negress bent over the senseless girl, and seizing her in her strong arms pulled her out of the snow-drift.

"She's dead for sure!" the old woman muttered, as she held the light, motionless

form of the girl in her arms, but when she pressed her great black cheek against the alabaster one of the girl, she felt the warmth of the blood still coursing feebly in the veins.

"I speck's a little whisky would fetch her, kase dat's w'at it's good fur." Then she looked around her carefully. The inspection was hardly needed, for the driving snow and the howling blast alone surrounded them.

"I reckon dere ain't any State comforts 'bles 'round," she muttered, "kase I don't want fur to have de whisky took away from me."

It was evident that the old lady referred to the State constables and the license law.

She drew a good-sized flask from her pocket, and removing the cork, forced some of the liquor down the throat of the senseless girl.

The yellow dog sat on his haunches, and with an air of intelligence, which plainly signified his approbation, surveyed the proceedings.

"Dere, honey, dat will fetch you!" the negress said, caressingly smoothing back the coal-black hair which, dank as wet seaweeds, fringed the lovely face.

The liquor was of the worst kind, almost powerful enough in its strength and badness to raise the dead. Like a stream of liquid fire it coursed down the young girl's throat; a convulsive shudder shook her slender form, and a deep sigh came from her parted lips.

The snow still poured down pitilessly, and the cruel north-easter still roared and stormed, yet the old woman heeded not the driving snow nor the piercing wind; a human life trembled in the balance within her arms. What was the strife of the elements to the human struggle for existence?

The negress poured some of the whisky into her hand and bathed the girl's face with it. As the sufferer inhaled the powerful odor of the spirits, again she shuddered. The limbs stiffened for a moment, became rigid, then relaxed, and with a low, mournful sigh, more like the echo of a sigh than a sigh itself, the great eyes opened—the great staring black eyes almost superhuman in their wondrous beauty—so large, so bright, and within them shone a lustrous light, like unto the shimmer of the sun shining upon the rolling waves of the great green ocean.

For a moment the girl stared blankly into the great black face that was peering down so closely into her own, then, amazement appeared within the great dark eyes.

"Ye ain't dead, honey, bress de good Lord for dat!" exclaimed the old woman, piously, the true spirit of thankfulness beaming in every line of her good, kindly face.

The girl turned her head slightly as if to gaze about her; the dog noticed the motion. Instantly he stood up on his hind legs and indulged in a series of short, lively barks. He understood that with nose and claws he had not dug in the snow-bank in vain.

"Don't be afeard, honey; dat's only Pete; he's a good dog; he smelt you out in de snow, jest like a little yaller angel," said his owner, with enthusiasm.

"Oh!" moaned the girl, feebly, her head sinking back on the arm of the negress.

"Does ye feel weak, honey?" asked the old woman, benevolence beaming in every wrinkle on her sable face. "Jes' take 'nuther suck at dat whisky."

"Who are you?" muttered the girl, faintly.

"Why, Lor' bress yer, Ise only Aunt Dinah," answered the sable-faced Sambo. "I don't live yere. I lives down at Biddeford whar de big mills are, heap o' miles from dis yere place. I was jes' gwine to de depot when dat yaller dog o' mine—dat Pete, smelt you out in de snow-bank."

"Why didn't you leave me alone?" the girl asked, slowly, and with broken accents.

"W'at's dat, honey?" cried the old "Aunt," in astonishment. "By golly! dis yere ole nig nebber sleep a wink dis night if she'd left a gal like you in dis yere snow-bank. Dat ain't 'cording to de Scriptures."

"Go away!" muttered the undeniably unhappy sufferer, striving feebly to release herself from the grasp of the old woman.

"W'at, me! Lordy, w'at's dis ole nigger done dat you send her away?" cried the negress, in astonishment.

"I want to die!" the girl murmured.

"Oh, chile, I done guess you nebber reads de Good Book!" said Dinah, solemnly.

"Dar ain't any use fur to talk like dat. De Lord isn't going fur to let you die, kase he sent Pete and me fur to pull you out o' de snow."

At the mention of his name the dog approached, and thrust his cold nose against the cheek of the girl; then he gave a quick, short bark, a very joyful bark, which plainly told that he considered he had done a wonderful thing in rescuing the girl from the snow-drift.

"Dere, does you hear dat? It's ole Pete tellin' yer how glad he is fur to see you speak."

"I don't want to speak—I don't want to live," and the girl broke into a flood of tears—bitter, burning, scalding tears.

"You musn't talk like dat, honey; dat's wicked, dat is."

"I am not fit to live," was gasped through tears.

"Lordy! you ain't done stole any thing?"

"No!"

"Ye ain't killed anybody?"

"No, no!"

Then the old negress, perplexed, looked down at the hand of the girl; the hand so

white and fair, it shamed the driven snow fresh from heaven's garner.

"She ain't married, 'kase dere ain't any ring on her finger," the old negress muttered to herself. "Maybe, honey, dat de young man dat you loved has fooled yer?"

"No, no, I have never loved any one," she murmured, the tears still streaming down her cheeks.

"Fore de Lor'! I'd like fur to know w'at dis yere poor chile has done!"

"Won't you go away and leave me alone?" the sufferer asked, plaintively.

"Leave you yere in dis snow-bank, honey?" exclaimed Dinah, in astonishment.

"Why, dis ole nig nebber hold her head up arter dat. By golly! I ain't gwine fur to let yer die dis bressed night!"

"I must die!"

"If yer don't hush up now, bress de Lor', I set Pete on yer!" said the negress, threateningly.

"I don't care," muttered the girl, closing her eyes again.

"Dat dog, Pete, jes' eat yer right up now, sure. So, honey, git up and come wid yer aunty."

"No; I laid down here in this corner, so that I could die in peace under the snow. Go away, and let the snow cover me up and hide me from all the world."

A sudden idea came to the kindly soul.

"I speck you ain't got any money."

"Not a cent in the world."

"Ain't done got any friends, honey?"

"No, no friends."

"Dat's de reason you want fur to die?"

"Yes, one reason—but I am not fit to live!" exclaimed the girl, returning again to the old subject.

"Bress de Lor'!" cried the negress, in astonishment; "w'at has ye done?"

"Nothing—nothing!"

"Well, if ye ain't done nuffin', you isn't gwine to die. If you hain't got any money, jes' you come right along wid yer ole aunty. I lives 'way down in Biddeford, Maine. Ise jes' gwine fur to take de keers fur to go home. You kin come along wid me, an' when I gets you down dar, den you won't want to die."

A thoughtful expression came over the girl's features; it was plain that she was thinking over the offer.

"Biddeford?" she said, slowly.

"Yes, chile, it's a heap of miles from dis yere. Dere's whar de mills is."

"Mills?"

"Yes, honey; whar dey make de cloth."

"If I go with you, perhaps I could get work there?" the girl said, thoughtfully.

"Of course you kin," cried the old woman, briskly. "I washes for de gammer, of de biggest mill dere. I knows dem all."

"No one will know me at Biddeford," the girl murmured, evidently communing with herself, and unconscious that she was speaking aloud.

"Dat so, honey; will you be a good child and come wid yer ole aunty?" the negress asked, assisting her charge to rise to her feet.

Standing, the girl was of the medium height, and even the loose waterproof cloak which she wore could not disguise the matchless beauty of her perfect form.

She was very weak and could not stand without assistance.

"But I have no money," she exclaimed.

"I kin pay yer fare, honey; dat's only lendin' to de Lord if you nebber pays me; but, bress you, honey, you'll make more money at dat mill in a week dan yer ole aunty in a month."

"I will go with you; what is your name?"

"Dinah Salisbury; Aunt Dinah de folks calls me."

"My name is Lydia—Lydia Grams."

"Dat's a putty name."

The old woman adjusted the hood upon the girl's head and smoothed back the dark locks. Then she supported her to the depot. The 8 p. m. Express bore the three—the dog, Pete, being the third one of the party—eastward to the State of Maine.

### CHAPTER II.

#### THE MINSTREL BAND.

THE town of Biddeford, Maine, in the pleasant month of August.

In a large front room, in the Biddeford House, which fronted on the little square in the center of the village, were four men.

One sat by the window—a little fellow, with short cut hair and a huge mustache of almost supernatural blackness. It was just in the dusk of the evening, but still with light enough for him to read a glaring "poster," printed in red and black, which was affixed to a board, leaning against the wall of the post-office building opposite, and which announced the coming of the "Original Alligator Minstrels."

The little fellow was the "celebrated Johnny Snodgers, the Silver Cloggit;" vide the poster aforesaid.

Two more of the "Alligators" sat by a table in the center of the room—one, a short, thick-set fellow, with a round, German face; the other, a tall, thin, Yankee-looking personage, with a lantern-jawed countenance. The first of the two was known, professionally, as "Fatty" Kline; the other, Professor Handel Hill, the "world renowned violinist;" vide "poster," as before.

The fourth one stood leaning carelessly against the mantel-piece—a young, dashing, handsome fellow of twenty-five, with the face and form of an Apollo. Golden hair curled in little silken clusters all over his shapely head; his features were regular and clearly cut; his eyes were large and full, a bright, deep blue. A golden mustache over-





hung his full, red lips, and a little imperial of the same hue graced his chin. He was dressed elegantly, quite a contrast to the shabby attire of his companions. He was known as Daisy Brick, and was the manager of the "Alligators."

It was evident from the looks of the occupants of the room that a stormy discussion was going on.

"Well, this is the worst old party that I ever did get into," Mr. Snodgers said, with an air of disgust.

"I never see'd any thing like it," the "champion tambo," Kline, remarked.

"I wish I had staid at home," Hill said, mournfully.

"Well, gentlemen, the 'Alligators' have 'gone up,'" Brick observed. "Mr. Snodgers, could you oblige the company with the favorite air, 'Up in a balloon, boys?' and the facetious minstrel manager commenced humming the tune.

A growl of disgust came from both Snodgers and Kline.

"If you had 'a' had the 'stamps' we wouldn't have gone up!" Snodgers exclaimed, indignantly.

"If you hadn't have made a beast of yourself by getting drunk last night, we might have been able to have given a show to-night, and so have gone on to the next town," Brick retorted, but without a trace of annoyance in his manner.

"Well, you didn't know how to manage the show, anyway," Snodgers said, in a sulky way.

"No, not such 'show' folks as you are," Brick said, quietly. "When you got acquainted with me in Boston and suggested this speculation, I thought that you were a regular minstrel performer. If you had told me that you were only a Natick shoemaker out of a job, why I shouldn't have risked what little cash I had."

"I'm just as good as the fellows who get the high sal," Mr. Snodgers remarked, with an air of dignity.

"In your own opinion, yes; but the great public, who pay their money, don't think so," Brick replied.

"That's 'cos I ain't appreciated."

"And you never will be, I'm afraid."

"Why don't you go on, Mr. Brick? Perhaps we may do better somewhere else?" Hill asked, in his sober, innocent way. The manner of the violinist was in strong contrast with the low, vulgar tone of the other two.

"No, thank you," said Brick, quickly and dryly. "I've had about all I want already. I'm not a beggar; I know when I've got enough. I'm two hundred dollars out of pocket, and that's quite sufficient."

"Where's the rest of the boys?" asked Snodgers, suddenly.

"By this time I rather think that they are all down at the depot, waiting for the next train to Boston. Each one came and told me confidentially that he was going, and that he wasn't going to say any thing about it to the rest," Brick said.

"I guess we had better go, too!" Snodgers cried, suddenly, rising. The others followed his example.

Snodgers and Kline seized their hats and instruments and rushed out of the room without taking any notice of Brick. But Hill approached and offered his hand.

"Good-by, Mr. Brick," he said; "I'm really sorry that you didn't have better luck; it's too bad."

"Oh, it's all right, old fellow," Brick replied; "we would have run if the rest hadn't been such a set of infernal scoundrels that there was no getting along with them. Take my advice and don't have any thing to do with them; you're the only gentleman in the party. Good-by."

Hill departed and Brick was left alone. He took the chair that Snodgers had vacated, and sat down by the window; then he drew a cigar from his pocket, lit it, and gazed idly out into the street.

"When one door shuts another opens, they say," he mused, between the fragrant puffs of smoke. "Where is the door for me? What a deuced strange world this is, anyway! Here, from the age of twelve up to the present time, I have lived in the world by gulling my fellow man—swindling, the world terms it. Now when I get into this infernal speculation I had a little over two hundred dollars. My conscience reproached me; the aforesaid conscience said, 'Brick, you have been an infernal swindler all your life; now, here's a chance to be an honest man; become the manager of a minstrel band, and make a fortune by swindling the public collectively instead of individually.' I listened to that 'small, still voice,' and what is the result? For six days I have been compelled to associate with the biggest lot of blackguards that I think exist in the world; not a gentleman in the crowd but one. I discover—too late—that my minstrels are all humbugs—hangers on to the sable ranks, scoundrels of the worst kind, who disgrace themselves as they have disgraced me. Thank heaven I'm clear of them, and now once more to their loose change. It's a pleasant evening. I'll take a stroll up the street."

Brick descended the stairs. As he emerged from the hotel doorway, a young fellow who was standing near by came forward and accosted him.

"Good eve, Mr. Brick," he said.

The speaker was a tall, rather ungainly-built specimen of humanity, with a "tow-head," a sharp, angular face, but lit up by a shrewd, good-humored smile, and keen gray eyes.

"Good-evening, sir," Brick replied, rather at a loss as to who the speaker was.

"Don't remember me, do you? Show!" exclaimed the stranger, "guess I've got a little advantage of you. I met you 't'other night when you g'n a show up to Dover."

"Oh, yes, I remember now," Brick said, extending his hand. "Do you reside here?"

"Guess I do; I'm tew hum here; I'm clerk in a grocery store up the street yonder, just round the square. Say, do you ever ist any p'ison?" inquired the Yankee, sinking his voice to a whisper.

"Well, once in a while."

"Got a little the nicest New England rum up to the store you ever did see. Got a bottle when I was in Boston 't'other day. Like to have you come up and sample it; make your hair curl."

"Well, I don't mind," Brick said, and the two proceeded up the street.

"Say, you don't g'n a show to-night, do you?" the Yankee asked.

"No; the concern is shut up."

"Busted all to smash, eh? Well, I don't want to flatter you. I see'd the thing up to Dover, an' I thought it was the all-fired worst show I ever did see."

"It was pretty bad, that's a fact; you see,

I was deceived about the performers I had," Brick said.

"Yes; guess you don't know my name, do you?" said the Yankee, suddenly.

"No, I do not remember it."

"Jeremiah Gardner; folks all call me Jerry for short, though."

Just then a couple passed the two; a young girl and a tall, fine-looking young fellow.

Brick caught a glimpse of the girl's face and stopped suddenly. His companion looked at him in astonishment.

"Hello! What's the matter?" he exclaimed.

"That lady that passed," Brick said, a strange expression upon his face.

"What of her?"

"I think I know her—no! I didn't exactly mean that," he said, just a little confused, but what I mean is that she looks like a girl that I used to know down South."

"I guess she never was down South," Gardner said; "leastways, I never heard her speak of being down there."

"You know her, then?"

"Well, I should say I did," Gardner replied. "She lives in the same house I do—boards with my mother."

"She does?"

"Yes; her name is Lydia Grame. She works in the big mill across the river."

"A mill-hand, eh?"

"Jest so; but don't you go to turning up your nose at her because she is a mill-hand. I tell you, our Yankee mill-girls ain't to be sneezed at, and as for Lydia, she's jest as nice a lady as ever walked on shoe-leather."

"She looks like a nice girl," Brick remarked, carelessly.

"Well, she is now!" Gardner exclaimed, earnestly. "She's the gal in this town. Why, she's got more beaus than you could shake a stick at in a week; that is, I mean, that she could have 'em if she wanted 'em."

"Who is the young fellow that she is walking with?" Brick asked, carelessly.

"That's Sinclair Paxton; he's treasurer of the mill she works in. His father's about the richest man around these parts; owns more of the mill stock than any other man, 'cept Daddy Embden, perhaps."

"And who's Daddy Embden?"

"Jest the queerest old coddler you ever did see. He lives in the big house up on the hill, back of the hotel; got a darter, putty and all possessed. Ain't she got a temper, though? I tell you, she makes 'em stand 'round when she gets a-going, they say. Old Daddy Embden used to be as poor as Job's turkey 'fore the war."

"How did he make his money?"

"That's more than anybody knows. He used to own a little coasting schooner that carried market truck all along from Portland to Boston, but when the war broke out, he an' his schooner disappeared. Then Gardner lowered his voice, mysteriously.

"Folks will talk, you know, an' they do say that he made his money running the blockade down South."

"Running the blockade?"

"Yes, carrying medicines and powder and arms to the Rebs."

"Oh, I understand."

"No, tellin' you know, whether there's any truth in it, but after the war, he came back with plenty of money—sed he made it speculating—an' built a big house up on the hill, an' he cuts an awful swath, that is, his darter, Delia, does. As for the old man, he goes 'round, lookin' more like some old pauper than the boss of the concern."

"But this young fellow—this?"

"Paxton, Sinclair Paxton."

"Yes; is he the favored suitor of Miss Lydia?" Brick asked, with apparent carelessness.

"Show! I guess he ain't!" Gardner cried, quickly. "Sid is a putty good feller, but she don't care for anybody. I b'lieve though, he jest loves the very ground she walks on; so does Jed Hollis."

"Jed Hollis, who's he?" Brick began to be interested.

"Jest the smartest young mechanic that there is in the State of Maine. Got two or three patents a-ready—smart as a steel-trap. Only got one fault. When he comes skinnin' 'round Lydia, an' she tells him out an' out that she don't care for him, he goes straight off an' 'lists more New England grist-mill, an' swears he'll lay out Paxton some time. You see he fancies that the gal cares more for Sid than she does for him."

"Then there will probably be trouble between them?"

"I guess so. If Jed—Jediel's his name—ain't plaguery careful he'll get the worst on it, for Sid's a hefty feller an' spy as a cat. Used to be a sailor; run away to sea when he was a boy. His father, Deacon Edmund Paxton, 's one of the old stock, nice a man as ever lived, only a leetle crusty; his folks came over in the Mayflower, but they do say that one of the Paxtons, 'way back, married an Injin queen, an' that's where Sid gets his dark hair an' eyes from. He's a good feller, but jest as cold as an iceberg. I guess the old man would cut up like all possessed if he knew that Sid was hangin' 'round Lydia."

"Miss Lydia is not rich then?"

"Rich! Well, I guess she ain't, much; besides, she's a stranger here. The old deacon would think more of that; he's good to the speaker was a tall, rather ungainly-built specimen of humanity, with a "tow-head," a sharp, angular face, but lit up by a shrewd, good-humored smile, and keen gray eyes.

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chairs of state, its round center-table, innocent of dust, and stuffed rocking-chair, was very cozy indeed.

In the parlor, sitting by the open window, inhaling the rich odor of the fragrant vines without, was the girl, known as Lydia Grame, the mill-hand, and Sinclair Paxton, the treasurer of the largest mill in Biddeford, or in Saco, rather, for the mill was on the Saco side of the river.

Lydia Grame we know already. She has not changed a great deal since the night when the "yaller" dog Pete and the old black woman rescued her from the cold embraces of the snow-drift. Her cheeks have grown a little fuller and the blush of health has succeeded the pallor of cold and exhaustion.

She was dressed very neatly—a light, fleecy gown, white, with dainty scarlet strips running through it; a knot of ribbon of the same hue gathered at the throat, holding the little white collar together, and a flame-colored ribbon twined around the head, binding in the glorious black hair.

There was a great resemblance between Lydia and her lover, Sinclair Paxton.

He was tall and straight, with a stately, noble head well poised, broad shoulders, and muscular in build. His eyes were black and piercing as the orbs of a panther. His hair was brown-black, wavy and rather long, curling around his ears. His face was a peculiar one—a rather sad face; a face that betrayed that its owner's pathway in life had not been always in the sunshine, and that a full measure of cares and sorrows had traced the tell-tale lines beneath the eyes. A face though, despite its sad look, which could light up with a smile, so pleasant, so beaming, that it made the person look five years younger.

Paxton was a man of thirty. If report spoke true, one who had seen a great deal of the world, had traveled to far-off foreign climes, as a common sailor before the mast; yet in his veins ran the best blood of New England—the Mayflower blood, that may, in the olden time, have expressed itself in harshness, when impelled by the fanatic religious spirit, but never yet had lent itself to low trickery or deceit.

Sinclair was an only child, the sole heir to one of the richest men in the State of Maine, and yet he loved the simple mill-hand, Lydia Grame, the poor girl who gained her bread with her own hands by daily toil.

The two had just returned from their walk.

Lydia was looking more thoughtful than usual. She had cast her hat upon the center-table, and sitting down, was gazing absently out of the window.

"What are you thinking of, Lydia?" Paxton asked, in his rich, melodious tones.

"I do not know," she replied, slowly.

"That's strange," he said, with a quiet smile upon his dark face. "You are thinking deeply about nothing."

"I own I can not very well explain my thoughts, and yet I am thinking about something."

"Lydia, will there ever come a time when you will think of me?" Paxton asked, earnestly.

"Oh, why do you ask such a question?" she said, mournfully.

"Because I must ask it," he replied, quickly. "It is impossible for me to sit here, look in your face, and not put such a question to you. Lydia, I love you."

"So you have said before," the girl answered, bending her full dark eyes upon the earnest, noble face of Paxton.

"Lydia, I have asked you to be my wife, and you never yet have answered me."

"Answered you?" she said, slowly, crushing a leaf between her white fingers.

"Why not say yes or no and end my suspense?" he questioned, eagerly.

"Why should I say yes or no?" she said, slowly. "Why can not we always keep as we are?"

"As we are?" he exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Yes; you tell me that you love me—"

"And do you not believe me?" he said, earnestly, interrupting her.

"Believe you?—yes!" she exclaimed, looking him full in the face with her brilliant dark eyes, and impulsively extending her hand to him.

The little white hand once a prisoner in his broad palms, he did not suffer it to escape again.

"I know that you love me," she continued; "you have proved it in a hundred ways. I am far below you in station, only a poor girl—"

"Oh, what nonsense you talk!" he exclaimed, lightly, again interrupting her. "There is no disgrace in honest labor."

"True, yet rich men's sons do not usually seek poor girls for wives."

"I do not speak of my father's wealth in connection with me," he said, gravely. "Think of me as I am—simply Sinclair Paxton, working for my bread exactly as you work for yours."

"But you get a great deal more money for it than I do," she said, laughing.

"That is true," he said.

"But to return to what I was saying," she observed. "You love me and I like you. I am happy in your society. You talk about the same things that I like to talk about; you like the same books, the same poets. Why not then continue as we are? Why speak of love—and marriage?"

"Because that is the natural sequence to love. I want you for my own, for all time to come," he replied.

"But I do not think that I love you well enough to marry you," she said, slowly.

"Think how dreadful it would be if I should marry you and then afterward discover that I loved some one else better!"

"I have little fear of that," he said, confidently. "I am certain that you will never marry me until you are sure that you do love me, and Lydia, I think that I know you well enough to feel assured that yours will be no fickle love."

"You think that you know me?" the girl said, slowly, and a strange smile appeared upon her beautiful face. "Are you sure that you really know any thing about me at all? Remember, I am almost a stranger to you; a short eight months ago you and I were strangers to each other. You do not know any thing about my past life; you do not know what I may have done, what I may have been. Are you not venturing your love upon an uncertain sea? Many a ragged reef may rear its head beneath the surface of the shining wave."

"With love for my pilot, I do not fear," he replied. "I feel sure that your past life has been as blameless as is your present one."

A shudder passed over the slight form of

the girl. Paxton felt the little hand grow suddenly cold and tremble within his own.

"What's the matter, Lydia?" he asked; "your hand is as cold as ice."

"Oh, nothing," she said, with a sad smile. "I am nervous sometimes, and—"

But there, don't ask me to give you reasons for any thing I do. A woman, you know, never reasons."

"What a strange girl you are, Lydia!" he exclaimed.

"Do you know, I think so sometimes," she said, quite earnestly and thoughtfully. "I do not seem to have any thing in common with the rest of the world."

"We would make an excellent couple, then, Lydia, for they say that I am strange, too," Paxton said.

"Well, you are."

"Tell me in what way?"

"Why, you sometimes have such odd, silent fits; you look so grave. Then, too, you love me, only a poor girl; one, too, who has frankly told you that she did not think she would ever care for you in the way you wanted her to."

"Possibly because the actions of the girl belie her words," he said, quietly.

For the first time, a slight blush came into her pale cheeks and forehead.

"I do not understand how that can be," she said, puzzled.

"You wish me to explain?"

"Yes; I confess I do not understand. I have always tried to act toward you as I should act to a very dear friend, a brother, one for whom I could feel but a sister's love."

"Ah!"—and a quiet smile crept over his face—"you have always tried; you have been regulating your conduct toward me by rules, then? You feared to follow the impulses of your heart?"

"I did not say that!" she cried, quickly.

"No, but the application follows. Will you answer me one question?"

"That depends altogether upon what the question is."

"Do you have to regulate your conduct by rules in regard to any one else?"

The girl was silent for a few moments. She looked down at the floor, then suddenly she raised her eyes to the young man's face.

"I do not wish to answer that," she said, shyly, a half-smile creeping over her face.

You blame me for loving you when you give me such encouragement as that?" and a smile appearing on his dark face also. "You do not make such rules in regard to any one else. It report speaks true, I have a dozen rivals for your love, and yet I do not fear any one of them. Do you know why?"

The girl shook her head.

"Because you do not fear them."

"I do not understand."

"You do fear me; that is, you have determined not to love me and you fear that you will do so, despite yourself."

"I am no match for you in reasoning," she said, slowly.

"You do not deny the truth of my words?"

"Of what avail would that be? If I did, in your logical way you would clearly prove that I did not; therefore I shall not attempt it," she said, smiling.

"Therefore, it clearly follows that, if I prove in 'my logical way' that you ought to marry me, you will do so without further argument."

"No, no!" she exclaimed. "I shall not be quite so positive as that. But you said just now that by my acts I encouraged you to hope. Now I confess I can not remember doing any thing at all to encourage you, except showing, possibly, that your society is pleasant to me; but that is only friendship, not love."

"Unconsciously you betray to me that you do care something for me," he said, gravely.

"Please explain."

"A moment since, impulsively, you extended your hand to me. I took it; it has remained in my grasp ever since, and you have manifested no desire to withdraw it."

She looked him in the face for a moment; the blush upon her cheeks deepened, and then she quietly withdrew her hand from his, and turning her face away, looked out of the window.

The twilight was ripening fast into the somber gloom of night. The crickets were singing merrily, and the perfume of the flowers, borne on the gentle breeze of the evening, filled the little parlor with a sweet, intoxicating odor.

It was a time for love—that dreamy, quiet twilight.

"By my own words I rob myself of the pleasure of holding that little white hand within my own. I speak—for you bid me speak—even though I feared that my words would displease you."

"You attach too much importance to trifles," she said, coldly. "I am foolish sometimes, and yield to impulses, then blame myself afterward. I was unconscious that my hand had remained in yours."

"And upon that unconsciousness I build my hopes. If within your heart you did not care something for me, you would have been conscious that my hand held yours a prisoner. But I fear that I have offended you, so I will say good-night, and trust that before we meet again you will have pardoned me for speaking so plainly."

Paxton rose, took his hat and opened the door. Lydia did not move until the door creaked on its hinges. Then, suddenly, she rose to her feet, and, through the dusk of the coming night, with outstretched hands advanced toward her lover.

"You are offended now," she said, plaintively.

"Offended, Lydia!" he exclaimed, in deep tones, full of suppressed passion; "offended at you, the girl whom I love beyond expression?" and he clasped the extended hands of the girl within his own broad palms, then, with a sudden motion, which she did not strive to resist, he drew her to his breast and folded his strong arms around her, pressing her close to his heart.

Like one incapable of motion, passive she laid her head down on his breast and nestled closely in his arms.

"You are so noble—





it as though it had been a ghost, then made some excited inquiries in regard to it. What Shirely had said about him, and what you had said about the ring, led me to accuse him of being Pirate Paul; then, turning I fled from his presence. But, oh, Martha! my poor heart is breaking. I can not give Ralph up, though he be Death-Notch himself!"

"No, you shall not give him up, Sylveen," exclaimed Martha. "There is some terrible mistake in this ring matter. Although I know not what occupation Ralph St. Leger follows, I know, beyond a doubt, he is not Pirate Paul nor one of his gang."

"But he acted as you said a robber would, when he saw the ring."

"That may all be, Sylveen; but it's a mistake I know not what to do about. I may have known something of that ring long before it came into possession of him who gave it to me. But, rest assured, Ralph is not a robber."

"Oh, Heaven! then I have committed an unpardonable error I fear. I may never see Ralph again."

"I will do all I can to bring about a meeting and reconciliation," said Martha; "but, Sylveen, has Scott Shirely pressed his suit for your hand lately?"

"He has asked me to be his wife repeatedly. But I do not love him. I love Ralph alone. Still, uncle Hatch is anxious that I should marry him—insists upon it, and says I will have to choose between him and poverty. I do not know what to do, Martha."

"Tell Scott Shirely to look at that ring the next time you see him. Ask him if he remembers the maiden he gave it to, in Quebec, scarcely a year and a half ago. Ask him whether the waters of the St. Lawrence ever give up their dead, and whether or not he has a wife already?"

Sylveen was startled by these remarks. They puzzled her.

"You appear to know Scott Shirely, Martha," she said.

"Know him? Alas, to my sorrow! I, Sylveen, am his lawfully wedded wife, whom he deceived, betrayed and tried to murder."

"Martha, is this really the fact?"

"It is, Sylveen. He gave me that ring, so you see why I gave it to you, for when he thought he had drowned me, he knew I had the ring on my finger; and by his seeing it had come to light again, I thought it might frighten the villain."

"Then he is a pirate?"

"Yes; he is Pirate Paul!"

A little cry burst from Sylveen's lips.

"Yes, he is Pirate Paul," continued Martha. "And I am here to do his footsteps and bring him to justice. But the hour has not yet come for me to strike."

"But, how did you find out that he is Pirate Paul?"

"Through a dear friend—El Pardou."

"The victim of Death-Notch?"

"No, the victim of the robbers themselves. They mistook him of being a spy, and having murdered him to avert suspicion, marked him and the tree under which he was found, with the totem of Death-Notch."

"Then you know where the robbers' hidden den is?"

"I do. I have been in it, and ere many days pass, it shall be made public. Shirely does not know that I live. He would kill me if he did. My love for him has turned to hatred, and I am here for revenge. But, Sylveen, here is a slip of paper and a pencil. Write a note and leave it here for Ralph. Ask his forgiveness, and for another interview."

"He might never come for it, Martha."

"He was here yesterday and the day before. He may come yet to-day. He can not give up his love for you, dear Sylveen."

"How do you know he was here, Martha?"

"I have a spy on Shirely's track. He saw Ralph here. He saw him go each time and look into that hollow tree, as if half-expecting to find something there."

"It is our old post-office," cried Sylveen, a light of hope beaming in her eyes. "I will write him a note and leave it here. Oh, Ralph! Ralph! I hope you will forgive me!"

She took the paper and pencil and wrote a note, which, with a prayer of hope, she deposited in the hollow tree.

Then the two wended their way back to the village.

In less than half an hour later, that note was read, but not by Ralph St. Leger.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THE STRUGGLE IN THE CREEK.

The two foes grappled in a deadly embrace—twisting themselves together like twining serpents, in pliant and subtle folds. So swift were their movements and evolutions that their bodies seemed incorporated into one. For a while no one could have told how the battle went, for they fought at times beneath the water and at other times they were enshrouded in a cloud of foam and spray.

For several minutes the conflict waxed hot. It was evident, too, that the strength of both was failing, for this conflict was less desperate than it first had been. Still, neither of them had drawn a weapon, and the struggle would have to be decided by main strength.

Suddenly, however, several figures emerged from the shadows of the woods, and gazed down on the struggling foes. They were savages, and a gleam of surprise and vengeance flashed from their eyes when they discovered the cause of the confusion in the water—saw their comrade in combat with the old hunter—saw that the tide of victory was slowly but surely turning in favor of the white man.

Quickly one of their number sprang into the creek and began wading to his friend's assistance, but, at the same instant, the rush of feet was heard on the opposite bank—a figure shot through the air, and landing on the savage, bore him down in the water. It was the friendly Omaha, while upon the bank, facing the savages on the opposite side, stood the Avengers, with their rifles leveled full at the breasts of the red foe.

A bloody conflict was only averted by a yell of triumph bursting from Omaha's lips, closely followed by another yell from the lips of Old Shadow.

The savages recoiled, and not wishing to engage in a struggle, the Avengers did not follow them up, nor fire a single shot.

Omaha and Old Shadow at once made their appearance from the creek. A scalp was at Omaha's girdle and a glow of triumph in his dark eyes. Old Shadow bore no trophy of his conflict, but he was gasping with exhaustion.

"Rather a tight place you were in, Shadow," said one of your young friends.

"Whoop, by crash!" he exclaimed; "ye bet it war now, but the cunning varlet has passed in his dockments. That war twice he disturbed my prospect for grub, the low-lived hound o' Satan. But, I tell ye, lads, wind is scarce 'bout this ole karkass, and hunger is purty plenty. But I've got a fine turkey out thar, and feel much like I could take half o' it, feathers and all."

Omaha waded across the creek and procured the turkey, and then they all returned to where the Avengers had lighted a fire.

It required but a few minutes to dress the game in hunters' style, then it was roasted to a crisp brown, and a goodly portion of it eaten with a sharp appetite and keen relish.

After the meal was completed and the remnants of the turkey stowed away for future use, Old Shadow expressed his readiness to fight his way through to the Indian village.

The little band soon resumed its journey, and as the day advanced, the keen eye of Omaha detected a fresh trail in the yielding soil. There were the hoof-prints of two or three horses, and a number of moccasin-tracks. Both Omaha and Old Shadow agreed upon their being made by a party of white men; and they all had reason to believe it was a party of robbers, pushing for the Indian village.

The Avengers at once proposed to follow the trail, believing it would be a more practicable route to the Indian village than any other, for if it was the trail of enemies they would naturally select the best and nearest route known to them to reach the Indian stronghold.

Omaha took the trail, and like a beagle freed from the leash, he led his companions forward at a rapid pace.

The day wore gradually away. It wanted an hour of sunset when a low whistle broke suddenly from Old Shadow's lips. The party came to an instant halt.

"What now, Shadow?" asked one of the boys.

"Ah, that's it," he replied; "you fellows are young and limber; yer hearin' may be better than mine. Yer eyesight may be quicker and stronger than mine; age is goin' back on me in them faculties that war one's clear and bright as a May mornin', but then I conceit that the sense o' smell is better in me than in any man on the border, all hounds included. And now, as sure as my scalp's over a warm head, there's a camp-fire close about. I detect the fumes of smoke in the air, and afore we go a foot further, propose we reconnoiter our situation. What's yer verdict, lads?"

"Reconnoiter," was the general response. "That's the cackle; if thar's any reds around, we'll set 'em up!" exclaimed the old hunter, and bringing the butt of his rifle heavily to the ground, he broke forth:

"The possum he grinned at the ole hedgehog."

But here a gesture, significant of silence, from Omaha, arrested his singing, and the next moment he had relapsed into silence.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## AN INTRUDER IN CAMP.

More than an hour before sunset a party of about twenty persons went into camp in the solitude of the dense woods bordering the Sioux river. Most of the party—in fact, all but two—were dressed and painted as Indians. Their movements, their garb, and equipments were purely Indian, but the anatomical construction of the facial outlines told that they were white men in disguise.

The other two persons were females. They were captives, too, for their hands were bound before them and their heads were bowed in grief. They were young women, both exceedingly handsome, yet depressed in spirit and fatigued with journeying.

In the background two horses were cropping the foliage. Their backs showed dark-marks, and had, in all probability, been ridden by the captive females.

The white Indians are lounging about in attitudes of listlessness and security. They seem to fear no danger. The savage they know is their friend, and there are no white parties around of sufficient strength to endanger their situation. So they can rest with impunity there beneath the canopy of the green forest trees, while their fair captives may chafe in spirit over their confinement, for it will avail them nothing.

A campfire is burning at one side, and one of the pale Indians is busy around it, broiling venison for their supper. It requires but a few minutes to prepare the meal, and when it is announced as ready, the hands of the captives are freed from their bonds. Then tender slices of the venison are brought to them, not on a silver tray, but on large green leaves. One of the captives accepts the proffered viand—the other refuses it.

"You had better take it, dear Sylveen," whispered Martha Gregory to her young friend; "it will give you strength which you may yet need, dearest."

Pretty, sad-hearted Sylveen, Gray took the venison and ate it, and after all it proved quite delectable to her taste. It added strength to her body, and in so doing it strengthened her hope of being rescued from Pirate Paul and his minions, who had effected their capture that morning while taking their usual walk in the woods near Stony Cliff.

The disguised men ate their supper in silence, then resumed their lounging attitudes; some engaged in smoking, others in silent thought.

Suddenly the whole band starts. Something like the sound of music reaches their ears, drifting through the forest aisles in notes faint as those of an Eolian harp—so faint as to be almost inaudible.

"What the deuce is it, anyhow?" asked Pirate Paul.

"Music, captain, sure as you're a sinner," replied one of his men, listening eagerly.

"Whew!" ejaculated another, "this must be paradise itself. The angels are tuning their harps."

The next instant every man is upon his feet. Those enchanting strains make all strangely anxious to know from whence such melody comes.

"We can't all leave at a time, boys," said Pirate Paul, glancing in a significant manner at the captives; "part go at a time and we'll last longer."

Seven or eight of the pirates resumed their positions of ease on the ground, while the others stole away in the direction from whence the music seemed to come.

As they move on, and on, the sound gradually grows plainer, clearer and sweeter. They move with the silence of phantoms, almost entranced by the ravishing

sounds that come to their ears. Surely it is an enchanted spot. They falter. Their wicked hearts grow cowardly. Something so sweet and heavenly in that music makes them feel as though they were approaching a hallowed spot with unclean spirits. Finally they pause. But the music swells out, nearer and sweeter than before. They can not resist its seductive inspiration. It fascinates them. It draws them on and on, until they stand upon the banks of a little stream, enchanted by what they see.

A little opening or glade is before them. In the center of it stands a little, vine-embowered cabin. A narrow path leads from the door through an archway of flowers and creeping vines. They run their eyes along that path, and just before them, where it touches the creek, they see two persons seated—a girl and a young man.

The former appears to them like an angel in a dream. In her lap she holds a Spanish guitar, over whose strings her little white fingers are fluttering like snowflakes, calling forth those sweet, melodious sounds.

They were enraptured, and that they might have a fairer view of the place and its inhabitants—that they might bring those sweet strains of music nearer, they parted the foliage and peered through upon the twin of lovers, Vida St. Leger and Fred Travia.

Leaving them to gaze enchanted upon the wildwood beauty and her lover, let us return to the robbers' camp, where Sylveen Gray and Martha Gregory are prisoners.

As soon as the captives had finished their meager supper, their hands were rebound. They were then placed in a small bower constructed for them of boughs and blankets.

Here the two women sat and talked over their misfortune and probable fate. Sylveen was sad at heart, and low-spirited, while Martha was hopeful of being rescued, and defiant to her captors.

Suddenly, however, their conversation was disturbed by a stranger voice that seemed to be approaching the camp, and singing, in a loud, jolly tone, the words:

"The possum he grinned at the ole hedgehog, The ole hedgehog, the ole hedgehog, The possum he grinned at the ole hedgehog, Way down by the Squam—"

"Halt, there!" suddenly rung out the voice of one of the robbers, and the peevish demand was accompanied with the click of a gun-lock.

Old Shadow, for he the intruder was, ceased singing, and confronted the white Indian with apparent surprise.

"By the royal voice of the woods," he exclaimed, "if you ain't a sassy cuss, now! Who are ye, ennyhow?"

"Me Ingin," replied the outlaw, attempting to counterfeit bad English.

"Now, ole buck, I'd hate to tell ye that yer tellin' a snug little lie, but nevertheless, it's a positive fact, you are a gawinew, down-at-the-heels, bare-faced—"

"Be careful, idiot!" exclaimed the indignant prairie pirate; "you might utter yer death-warrant."

"And you be keeful, ole muck-head, or I'll go through ye like an ounce chunk o' lead. I'm Ole Shader, I'd have ye know, ye villainous bull-pup, and if I on't flit across a man's vision, he's got his pass fur the sulphur diggin'."

"You're an old, blab-mouthed fool," retorted the robber, growing bolder as his friends gathered around him.

"You measure other's grain in yer own bushel, I see," replied the old hunter; "but, Mister, what's in that bower?"

"None of your business," returned the indignant robber.

"Cool, very cool; ye must have an iceberg atwixt yer cap and brain. But I can tell ye what's in that bower: it's a woman."

"Well, what's that to ye?"

"Why, ye durned sap-head scamp, ye stole her!"

The pirate did not finish the sentence, for the fist of Old Shadow was planted directly between his eyes, causing his heels to describe a semicircle through the air.

The outlaw was a large, burly fellow, and no doubt possessed of twice the old hunter's strength, but, with all the grit of an old hound, the latter grappled with his adversary before he could regain his feet.

The other robbers gathered around the combatants to witness the certain annihilation of the impudent old hunter, but they soon had a conflict of their own to prosecute. For the first blow from Old Shadow was the signal for the Avengers to make their appearance.

One discharge, however, of the Avengers' firearms caused the robbers to flee with terror. They attempted to rally when they saw the number of the foe, but were so closely pressed that they were compelled to continue their flight, leaving two or three of their number behind dead.

The victorious Avengers did not pursue them far. No time was to be lost, for they had seen the robbers under Pirate Paul leave the camp a few minutes before, and knew not how soon they would return. So they turned to assist Old Shadow, but neither he nor his foe were to be seen!

They saw, at once, however, where the leaves and ground were tore up in a broad path extending down a steep inclination that finally terminated in a perpendicular embankment. The combatants must have rolled over this cliff, and had, in all probability, been dashed to atoms.

The Avengers hurried to the edge of the precipice and gazed down for their old friend.

A judicious and doleful sight met their view.

The cliff was about twenty feet high, and at the bottom was a pool of stagnant water, whose bottom was a soft, oozy slush of black mud.

In the center of this pool lay the robber on his back, and astride of him sat Old Shadow, completely covered with mud, his cap off, and his hair struggling in muddy, dragged tresses down over his face and eyes.

The robber was struggling desperately, though every movement he made served to settle his body deeper and deeper in the water and mire.

Slowly and regularly as "clock work" Old Shadow's bony fist arose and fell with a sudden sound in the face of the robber, while he gave vent to an ejaculation of vengeance between each blow.

"I'll smash (whack) you durned (whack) mug for (whack) you," he exclaimed, "ye lopin' (whack) gal-thief ye, (whack) and I'll larn (whack) ye how to (whack) insult a (whack) gentleman arter (whack) this too!"

"See here—stranger," the robber managed to blubber out, "I—I beg your pardon."

Old Shadow paused to gain breath.

"So, ho!" he exclaimed, "ye beg, do ye, ye pizen big thief?"

"I'll admit you're the best man, stranger, so please let me up, or I'll suffocate."

"That's the right cackle, ole snoozy; say on that way. Ye can't say enny thing that'll tech a tender spot quicker."

"If you're as hard all over as your cussed fist, you've no tender spot 'bout you."

Whack, came the old hunter's fist in the robber's face, causing him to bellow and beg for mercy.

"Then speak in a more perfit manner 'bout my fist, ye vagabone ye."

The robber, seeing that no one came to his assistance, and that the hunter had the advantage of him, was compelled to submit to his terms, and as he begged manfully and politely, as Old Shadow termed it, was permitted to raise his head out of the mud and water. Still the old hunter maintained his seat upon his body, and leaning slightly forward, he laid the tips of his index fingers together, and with one eye half closed, he said in a reproving tone:

"Now then, you big gawk ye, I propose to let ye go, hide and ha'r, but let me give ye a leetle advice. Go and repent, wash yer face, and keep yer nose clean; and if ever the devil or his angels tempt ye to steal another gal, or call a gentleman a liar, think of this mud-puddle and yours truly, and then say, 'Git ye behind me Satan,' then go hum to your dad. Now, remember this advice."

The old hunter arose as he concluded his advice and permitted the robber to regain his feet, and slink away among the shrubbery.

When he was out of sight Old Shadow waded from the pool, ascended the cliff and rejoined his friends, the most doleful sight imaginable. He saw at once that the youths were fairly convulsed with suppressed laughter, and coolly said:

"Larf, lads, if ye feel like it. Never let enny thing spile a good, hearty larf. It's one o' the essences o' life, and worth more to one's digestion than all the yarbs knowin' to Ingin medical science. Yes, larf her out, lads. I know I'm not very prepossessin' at present, but then, the mud 'lsoon wear off."

The young men could hold back no longer, and burst into a roar of laughter. But their joy was soon turned into disappointment, when Omaha, who had gone to see after the captive maidens, returned with the news that they were not in the bower, nor could they be found anywhere about.

They had either fled with affright, or had been spirited away during the conflict. But, whichever it was, our friends had no time for speculation over it, for at this instant they saw Pirate Paul and his men returning through the woods, and not wishing to run the risk of an engagement with such a superior number of foes, they beat a hasty retreat into the woods.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 136.)

## Edna's Opal Set.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"PROMISE me now, Edna, before I go. You are such a little witch that I am half afraid you will disappoint me, though."

Harry Delford was not far from right when he called her a little witch; and now, even while he was looking down into her eyes with his own, so earnest and almost serious in their expression, his handsome mouth just parted in a light smile, Edna Vernet was tossing her short, yellow-gold curls and letting her tiny pearly teeth peep between the scarlet-lips in the most teasing smile imaginable.

Now the most silvery of laughs heralded Harry's answer.

"But, *don't* promise, Mr. Delford—Harry, I mean," she added, with an arch glance at him. "Indeed, I would like to, but then—papa, you know—"

"Nonsense, Edna! you know well enough your father gave me his consent to win you if I could. That will not do for an excuse, you perceive."

"Besides," she went on, charmingly unconscious of the anxiety in her lover's voice, "there is Mr. Rexleigh, you know—"

"Confound Mr. Rexleigh! What has he to do with you and I, Edna? Oh, Edna, pet, don't mean to be cross to you, but when I hear you mention him as an obstacle to our happiness I can not help wishing him at the bottom of the Hudson."

"Oh, Harry Delford!" and the little exclamation of horrified surprise was denied by the mischief in her eyes.

"Harry Delford! you know well enough why I referred to Mr. Rexleigh."

Edna sat fanning herself very composedly; a picture of rare beauty and self-possession, and Harry, as he watched the play of her pretty features, wondered, away down in his heart, if all that roguish piquancy of Edna Vernet's manner hid a strong love for him—or Elmer Rexleigh.

Now, there was occasioned by Edna's last remark, a sudden loss of all his faith in himself, and success.

Suppose Mr. Rexleigh was an obstacle, as he had himself asserted, to his and Edna's happiness? or, in other words, what if his and Edna Vernet's happiness were not identical?

And then his lips trembled ever so slightly when he bravely asked Edna why Mr. Rexleigh had any thing to do with her promising to be his wife.

"Why?" and Edna for a moment lifted her sparkling eyes to his face; "because he has asked me to marry him. And he has not had his answer yet."

Harry shrunk away in a sudden horror. Surely if Edna loved him she would not stab him so; surely she must love Mr. Rexleigh, after—

Edna's clear, sweet voice dispelled the unwelcome train of thought.

"To-morrow is my birthday, Mr. Delford, and if I wear Mr. Rexleigh's gift at the party in the evening it will be the signal that I have favorably regarded him."

"If you do not, Edna?"

Harry's voice was very low and intense, and somehow there surged a flaming tide to the girl's cheeks.

"If I do not? Oh, then—but Mr. Rexleigh is very rich and handsome, you know."

"Yes, I know. And so you will throw me over, therefore?"

Edna laughed.

"I didn't say so, Mr. Delford. Come to-morrow night, though, and you will know if I will or if I—"

"You do not love Elmer Rexleigh, Edna—you know you do not! *won't* you tell me the truth that is in your heart, Edna, my own Edna?"

"Mr. Delford! you must not behave so!

Wait until to-morrow night—oh, before you go, let me show you Mr. Rexleigh's gift."

She took down from the locked drawer of her *eschelonne* a morocco case, and opened it before his eyes.

Very *recherché* they were, shimmering and glowing in their translucent glory on their bed of black velvet; Harry knew they were perfect, but he curled his lip with a disdain born of jealousy.

"They're quite pretty; but they will not suit your complexion half so well as this."

As he spoke, he reached toward the bay-window and broke off a spray of oleander, glorious in its exquisite hues of creamy-pink, delicate glowing scarlet and deeper red. He deftly fastened it in her flossy gold hair, then kissed her forehead after a glance of approving admiration.

"My birthday gift, Edna! It shall be my signal for victory to-morrow night; I *know* I shall be victor!"

Later, when Edna watched him down the shady avenue, and was sure he was out of sight, she snatched the oleander from her hair, and with cheeks that matched it well for exquisite tints, pressed her warm red lips to it, again and again.

"As if there *could* be a choice! But, I do so love to torment him!"

Then, with a care that was fondlest tenderness, she placed the flower in a slender crystal glass; with a gesture that was supreme contempt she pushed the case of opals into the drawer and locked them away.

"Well, daughter, how does it feel to be nineteen years old?"

Mr. Vernet bent his head to seal the birthday's kiss on the girl's white forehead.

"Oh, splendid, papa!—What, not another present?"

Mr. Vernet had deposited a small package beside Edna's cover.

"Before you open it, dear, I want to ask you a question, both for my own edification, as well as another's. Shall you accept Mr. Rexleigh, dear—or my friend, Harry Delford?"

Edna looked quickly across the breakfast-table.

"Why, papa, did you know—?"

Mr. Vernet laughingly interrupted her.

"I would have known it, child, if Harry had not been to my office last evening after leaving you. But, Edna, Mr. Rexleigh expects an answer this morning."

A decisive little curl was on her lips.

"My answer is ready, papa, as it was when Mr. Rexleigh asked me, through you, a week ago. Papa, I can not marry him. Will you tell him, please, and give him back the opals?"

"Opals? were they opals? Then you have not lost your jewelry by refusing him. Open your packet, Edna."

She undid the wrappings; and there, from her father, was her latest birthday gift—a splendid set of opals, larger, clearer, brighter even than Mr. Rexleigh's.

"Papa, thank you! I could not have been better suited. Oh, how lovely they are! How can I thank you enough?"

She wound her fair arms around his neck, and affectionately caressed his thick gray hair.

"Wear them to-night, dear, and be happy in them. That is all I ask."

Radiant as a fairy Edna was, as she stood in the center of her guests, directly under the chandelier, whose bright flame lent prismatic beauty to her flashing gems; and displayed to perfection the elegance of her white lace toilet, the beauty of her bright, girlish face, and exquisite figure.

Her cheeks were slightly flushed with the excitement of the occasion, and her eyes shone and flashed like stars, so watchful were they—for Harry Delford.

All the evening she had watched and waited for him; with the oleander bloom in her belt, where she placed it for the signal that she was his very own.

Now all her coquettish willfulness was gone; she was going to tell Harry, to his heart's content, how much she loved him; and so she watched and



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## Our Arm-Chair.

THE large number of manuscripts coming to us, underpaid in postage, make it very apparent that many authors are indifferent as to the fate of their contributions. The P. O. officials are now not only exacting full letter rates on all "press manuscripts," but, in addition, further the expense by doubling the amount of the underpaid postage. That this is illegal we think is unquestionable since it makes the whole amount of postage, when paid, exceed the legal rate of three cents for each half ounce. As a publisher has no power to prohibit the assessment, nor to correct the wrong done, all that authors can do is to be very careful to fully prepay every package submitted to the mails. Better, in fact, overpay a little to be doubly sure. We now advise the use of the express when it is convenient. The cost, in some instances, is greater, but you have the satisfaction of knowing that the manuscript will reach the publisher expeditiously, safely and without "extra charges."

**Chat.**—The good papers are no more responsible for the bad than Henry Ward Beecher is responsible for Reddy the Blacksmith; and yet, we frequently hear persons speak of all popular papers with a sneer. When asked for an explanation they unfailingly name some inferior and perhaps discreditable paper as a proof of their sweeping verdict. Of course, our first mental question is—how came you to read the paper which all decent persons try to avoid, but it won't do to ask so pertinent a question, and we usually are content to remark that the paper named is as much like the good popular papers as a hyena is like a horse. The popular papers of greatest circulation are unexceptionable, and are far safer to introduce to the fireside and home than any of the dailies. The dailies are unable to discriminate to a great degree; they must publish what is "news," and therefore detail many a story which had better have remained unpublished; whereas the weekly can and does discriminate closely, and it is, therefore, much the safer journal for the young to read. The very worst foes to our popular weekly journals are these constantly sinning dailies—which fact is very suggestive.

If this world is not wise and good it will not be for want of advice. The amount of wisdom and wise sayings afloat would be overpowering, only that men and women and children are human. As to err is human, it follows that, despite the good there is in these wise sayings, each one "errs" in enough to see the wrong side, and to be able to tell his children after him the things they are not to do. Tom Hood, Sr., told Tom Hood, Jr., to avoid the race-course and gaming-table, as he had seen the evil there was in them. "Yes, father," was the answer, "and I too would like to see the evil there is in them"—which convinced Tom, Sr., that boys would be boys, and proves the old adage that you can't place old heads on young shoulders. And it does something more: it has a moral, which is—don't be unreasonably censorious of the boys who are just as their fathers were before they were. Taken as a whole each generation repeats itself. Human nature is about the same everywhere, and he is a wise man who can understand this. When you meet such a wiseacre you will find a person whose charity overlooks a multitude of sins.

The "full styles," which are now fully developed, are about as absurd as bad taste can make them. The effort appears to be to see how much money can be laid out on a dress or hat, in the way of extraneous ornament. The body goods, no matter how expensive, serve only as a base or groundwork on which to plaster gimps, fringes, laces, velvets, etc., until the dress material is lost in a maze of tumpety and gawgaws as meretricious and absurd as the circus ring mountebank's bells. Not only is the ornamentation most barbaric exhibition of ostentatious but it is fearfully expensive. The common charge for merely making a dress is equal to the cost of a nice garment, while the frillery itself costs usually as much as the dress fabric. Twenty dollars is "cheap as dirt" for making an à-la-mode dress; the more usual cost is thirty to forty dollars for ordinary evening dresses, and, considering the amount of labor required, this sum is not an overcharge. There will be—there must be a revolution. The good sense of ladies and their keen appreciation of the fitness of things will lead them to simpler styles and more tasteful garments. Then the "artists" and "modelers" and merchants growing rich on woman's folly will bewail, but those who have to foot the bills will rejoice.

## Beware of That Woman.

I WOULD caution you against that woman who will enter your house as a friend, and after warming all your troubles and grievances out of you, will then go among your neighbors, saying you are fretful and complaining. Maybe she'll tell affairs that you have confided to her in secrecy, and one doesn't want to have private matters blazoned forth to the world. Keep clear of that woman who will allow her daughters to associate with those young men of whose characters she knows nothing and their keen appreciation of the things they have been, after taking a walk, and who will not ask to see the letters their daughters receive. A woman can not be too particular in these matters. Where there is concealment and mystery, something must be wrong, and if mothers would have their children turn out virtuous men and women, it is their duty to guard them in their youth. She who will not do that is not one whose acquaintance is worth desiring, and she needn't call at my house

any day this week, for I shall certainly be "not at home" to her.

Shun that woman's company who receives the visits of married men in the absence of her husband. She may tell you there is no harm in it; what of that? It looks badly enough, and appearances go a great way in this world.

Beware of that woman who passes more time in gadding about from one house to another than she does in attending to her own home. She loves to pick up any scandal that's on the wing, and use it against you some day, when you have offended her and she feels spiteful toward you. Such a being is no friend to you, and a worse enemy you could not find. Her tongue will wag against you, and she won't stick to the truth. She's a viper, and so contemptible a one that the one in the Garden of Eden was an angel compared to her.

Be distant with her who will praise you to the seventh heaven when she feels good-humored toward you, but who'll call you all manner of names when you do not do every thing she desires you to do. Such an individual is beneath one's notice, and is not worth the paper this is written upon.

Beware of that woman who will prevaricate—my dictionary says lie—to get herself out of a scrape. She's one who will speak all evil against your friend, and then will look demurely up in your face, and remark, "I am sure I never said anything against him." What a mean, low and despicable spirit that is! It seems to me my Bible says, "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." But this woman heads out those words, though she knows them just as well as you and I do. Ough! I'd double-lock my door against such a character, and she might rap her knuckles sore before I'd open it to her.

Keep on the other side of that woman who is continually bragging about the wealth and social standing of her relatives, for she is a most incorrigible bore. I don't think rich relations are much to boast about, unless they have cultivated minds as well. But this woman has a different view on that subject, and esteems the man who is possessed of a few greenbacks, even if his head be shallow, above him who has a fair share of brains, but whose purse is not so well lined. I've even heard her call a person who minded his own business, and in no way interfered with hers, "a fool," and why? Simply because he had an education, and knew the laws of etiquette and refinement, which she did not. I tell you to beware of that woman!

Do not keep open house to that woman who thinks it an honorable thing to vilify her neighbors, and to keep a village in a state of turmoil with her wagging tongue. She couldn't do more harm were she to set the place on fire, and the only good that would come of it would be her own conflagration.

Beware of that woman who delights in matchmaking. It's a trade I loathe, abhor and despise, and the trader is worse, by her presence, to me, than a venomous reptile, and I had rather come across the latter any day, for the poison of the former is more deadly.

Beware of that woman who is so engrossed in self that she does not desire others to have any pleasure—thinks every attention ought to be shown to her—imagines it to be a cruel thing if she can't have as much cash as you do—holds up her hands in horror if she has to pay to an entertainment got up by the young people, but would not hesitate to sneak in to a rehearsal of the same, if she could get free. There, I feel better for what I've said! People needn't imagine I'm going to smooth these matters over. If you come across any of these women I have named, beware of them! EVE LAWLESS.

## Foolscap Papers.

### Battle of Marathon.

ALL night the two armies lay close to each other in two straight lines, with nothing but an old rail fence between; one of the lines was horizontal, and the other was parallel. All night the brave men on either side would reach through and tickle the enemies with a straw, or steal their canteens. The cavalry stretched out on the backs of their horses; they were circumspect; every now and then a cavalryman would get up in his sleep and go to stirring around, and would fall out of bed, generally running his head into the ground like a spike.

They had lain that close together all the day before, as the Generals couldn't make up their minds to fight, but, when morning broke, Smith, the Athenian General, I forget his historical name, thought that if he could succeed in kicking Brown, the Persian General, this other name was Xerxes, so spelled because he made his mark (x) so often he would love him better, and ordered the battle to begin without further ceremony. He sent his First Division forward, but they failed to divide the Persian lines, although they poured a very heavy Greek fire into them, which they had no use for, and returned with thanks and great carnage.

The First Division returned with a good deal of subtraction and pretty fast in addition, for they had received a check which wasn't payable at any bank; they fell back on their muscles, and some of them broke their necks.

General Smith here discharged a volley of oaths at the enemy, which sent them reeling back to their lines. He surveyed the field with his hour-glass—he took a glass every half-hour, by the way—and sent a battalion forward with bats beating on tin pans to create a panic in the Persian ranks, but they were routed back again by the old route, having been kicked by the Persians, with great slaughter.

Xerxes Brown now opened upon the Grecian ranks his batteries of Parrot guns, hurling destructive parrots into the Greeks with great ferocity, and badly shattered their Corinthian columns.

The Greeks, having no use for their fire, returned it with thanks by opening their catapults on them at once, hurling a shower of terrific cats, that darkened the air and appalled the stoutest hearts with their murderous hissing. The left wing of the Persians was broken by this fire and couldn't fly. A twelve-pound cat struck Xerxes Brown on the nose, completely carrying that article away. He didn't like this class in the war.

The battle now began to rage in earnest on all sides. The Greek fusiliers poured fusil oil into the Persians, and the artists, who had charge of their artillery, poured such a repulsive fire into the Persian lines

that they got behind trees and scorned it; they then fired round shot, which would run around trees and breastworks and hunt up the enemy.

The bombs from the Persian bombazines were very destructive. A fifteen-inch bomb went down the Greek General, Smith's, back and lodged in his coat-tail pocket. A fifty-pound round shot entered his mouth, going down his throat and finally came out of his right ear.

Smith took a corps of extraordinary chargers, and saying, "Soldiers, from your pyramids thirty centuries behold you," charged upon the Persians' right, and there wasn't any of it left. He cut them all up and salted them down, and filing left with saw files he attacked the enemy's center. It was hard to hand. Smith's battle-cry rung out above the sound of conflict: "If any man attempts to haul away the American flag, shoot him on the spot." His sword flashed everywhere; it had teeth on one edge. He would catch a Persian by the hair and saw his head off with two strokes. He had his sleeves rolled up and a butcher's apron on. He ordered his own men to remain idle and look at him doing the killing, and said if there was a Herald correspondent present, he would be obliged to him if he would come forward so he could see better. He was no quarter-master and refused to give any quarter or other small change.

About noon, in the heat of the battle, a bottle of S. T. X.—1880 struck him in the stomach and made him stagger and reel; he was caught in the arms of his men and borne off the field yelling to the Persian General, Xerxes Brown, to stay till after dinner and he would come back and kill the balance of them, and was laid down on his knapsack to take a nap, covered with glory, mud, and the label of the bottle.

While the Greeks were partaking of their usual hard-tack (abbreviation of Hardee's tactics), the Persians, reinforced by seven million men, poured down upon the Greeks to see what they had for dinner. The Greeks were quite surprised at this visit, as no cards had been sent beforehand. General Smith jumped up, hastily put on his helmet—a small old iron kettle—pulled the handle of it down under his chin, buckled on his trenchant corn-cutter, brightened the brass buttons on his breast, put on a clean paper collar, got his men in a line (a very tight line), and shouting, "Charge, Chester, charge!" On, Mr. Stanley, on!" renewed the battle.

The two Generals met in the thickest of the fray. With one murderous swoop, Smith completely severed Xerxes' plume from his straw hat. X brought his ponderous mace down upon S's head and broke the iron kettle. Smith discharged his brook with his foot in it at X, who was reaching down after his plume, but, miscalculating the range, his foot went up and he came down on his back with the honors of war—that is he fell in defense of his country.

Just then was shouted, "They fly! They fly!" and Xerxes turned and saw his men in the pursuit of happiness, and started off himself, yelling, "A mule! My kingdom for a mule!" and, as there was no enemy there to fight, the battle ended.

Pensively, WASHINGTON WHITEHOORN.

## Woman's World.

Household Hints on Various Subjects.—How to Furnish a House with a Modest Sum of Money.

THERE is nothing outside of Love's young dream which renders young people so happy as going to housekeeping. If a young couple have been boarding for some time, that only enhances the pleasure. But, how often do we see in that flutter of delight as many foolish blunders committed as young lovers are guilty of.

At no time in life is more care required in the outlay of money than when commencing to keep house.

Perchance the economy are then required to put every dollar in something that will give lasting pleasure when you look at it, and enduring comfort for years, if not for life, and perhaps for your children's children.

Many young housekeepers fritter away small sums at a time on cheap and tawdry articles, which must be thrown away in a few years at best. Remember this maxim in making all your investments: "The best is the cheapest."

Furnish your rooms gradually with solid, well-made pieces of furniture, substantial rather than ornamental articles; good ingrained carpets on your bedrooms, and medium-priced Brussels or velvet on your parlors, and you will not have to re-furnish for years, perhaps never.

On your corridors or halls, and library floors put wood carpeting or linoleum, not oil-cloth. For your parlor and sitting-room use Brussels at \$2 or \$2.25 a yard. Let the pattern be in medallions or running vines or arabesques, whichever may suit your fancy; but, be sure that the figures are not large. The bedroom carpets should be of light and cheerful colors, blue and drab, or green and wood colors; figures small, the cost not more than \$1 or \$1.50 per yard.

The parlor set need not cost more than \$200. Black walnut with colored rep-upholstery to match the carpet would look best. Sets consisting of seven pieces, sofa, two arm-chairs and four small chairs are shown at the price named above. Any thing cheaper will not last, and if you are not able to furnish the whole house at once, it would be best to leave the parlor unfurnished for some months.

Bedroom sets of black walnut, consisting of ten pieces, bedstead, bureau, four chairs, table, wash-stand, towel-rack and rocker, will cost from \$125 to \$300. Such sets look well for all time, which can not be said of those painted affairs known as cottage sets. If you have not a sufficient sum to furnish two bedrooms well, do not use the money which would make one elegant and comfortable to make two tawdry and defeat all ideas of comfort, utility and beauty.

An extension table for your dining-room, sideboard and chairs are necessary. Your table will cost from \$30 to \$35, sideboard \$40, and chairs \$4 apiece. These should all be in black walnut, the style now most in vogue.

"Limoge" will answer in the place of china, and a white is preferable to a decorated set. Twenty-five dollars will purchase a set of one hundred and fifty-five pieces. It is not necessary to have cut glass, and triple-plated silverware will do quite as well as solid metal. Do not choose the cheap kind, but that which commands a good price, and will bear marking.

Do not be in a hurry to get curtains, but select those of handsome tamboured lace, with lambrequins to match the carpet, for

your parlor, while nothing can be so pretty for the bedrooms as dotted or figured muslin draperies.

A dining-room clock will be almost necessary. It need not cost more than \$10. One for the parlor, when purchased, should be of bronze, and if illustrating some incident, historical, mythological, or poetical, by a pretty striking group, so much the better.

For ornaments nothing can be handsomer than bronzes or a few figures in marble. But these are not necessities, and may be purchased at intervals. Be sure that each figure or group tells a story or illustrates a striking fact, and points a poetic or moral allegory. If you have extra funds to expend for ornaments, choose a few fine engravings or chromos instead of that French-American abomination—a mirror. Pictures educate the eye, cultivate the taste, and afford themes for conversation. A mirror looks well, only when it reflects such objects in its depths, as well as brocade and rosewood, or the well-dressed form of the mistress of the mansion.

Let us descend to the kitchen. Blessed is that small home where there is no hired help, and where the young mistress, with the occasional aid of a day's work from a laundress or house-cleaner, can do her own work. With our modern conveniences for facilitating the labor of the household, this is in fact a far lighter task than it was twenty-five years ago, when it was a much more common practice than now. That woman is dull, indeed, who can not cook with Prof. Blot in her hand and a patent steam cooker in her kitchen. For those who have never seen this triumph of British genius (for it was invented by a Captain Wanong of the English navy) we will endeavor to describe it.

It is a large tin box, and has a closely-fitting cover. There are upper and lower compartments, which serve as receptacles for the meats and vegetables. Underneath is a narrow chamber, containing water.

In using it, the vessel is set on the stove over the fire, and as soon as the water boils it is ready for use. Then you have only to place in the different compartments the meats, fish, vegetables, etc., allotted for the meal, and let the "cooker" remain on the fire till the process of cooking is finished.

As the viands can not come in contact with the water or steam, they are cooked in their own juices, and none of their nutritious qualities are lost. Of course it is impossible to burn or scorch the food.

That nuisance of small homes, the odor of cooking food, is completely obviated by this manner of cooking. No odor can be detected after the lid is put on the cooker, and when it is removed it will be found that each vegetable and meat has retained its distinctive taste, and has lost not one particle of its nutriment.

Of course every modern household should be provided with one of these inventions.

Another ingenious device is that of the pantry-table—a kitchen-table with a lid, which raises, and upon being set back against the wall is found to contain compartments and little drawers for every thing needed in preparing a meal, such as flour, sugar, butter, pepper, salt, and all those thousand and one things, it is well to have convenient to the hand, instead of having to run to the store-room, or open the safe or cupboard, to get them.

There is another thing to be avoided, which is this: there are so many new inventions and patents in the way of household conveniences, such as egg-whippers, fluting-machines, gas-irons, broom-rests, parlor-holders, silk-reels, etc., etc., there is danger of spending more money than is necessary at the outset. Remember it is not necessary to get every thing at once. Purchase each article as you find you need it.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**ANNIE B.** Wine or maroon color would be very handsome for your walking-suit. Made up of cashmere and silk in what is called a composite costume, that is, one-half cashmere and the other silk faille, mingled so as to show alternate sections of plaits of the two materials, alternate flounces, etc., it would be extremely pretty. Such a costume of any of the new shades, or "ghosts of colors" as they are called, would be equally pretty and effective. It would be best to select a pattern from some good and reliable catalogue of fashions to cut by.

**MRS. BURCHARD.** The small sewing-machines which are sold for ten dollars are wonderfully good and reliable, considering the price. They are very small, make a chain or loop-stitch with a single thread, and are fastened with a screw by any piece of furniture. They are worked by turning a handle and crank, not with a treadle. If you can not afford to pay fifty or sixty dollars for a machine, by all means get one for ten dollars, for no home should be without some kind of a sewing-machine.

EMILY VERDERY.

## Short Stories from History.

**A Faithful Companion.**—A Mr. Rogers and a Mr. Carr, both natives of Kentucky, were on their return from the Council Bluffs, on the margin of the Missouri, when the cold weather set in, accompanied with a deep fall of snow. Mr. R. being in a weak state of health, it was thought fittest to attempt to descend the stream, instead of traversing the forests. When one hundred and fifty miles from any settlement, the ice on the river prevented their descent, and no other alternative was left than to land, and leave Mr. R. in the woods, with some necessities, till the return of his friend, who went in quest of relief. Carr, with difficulty, reached the settlement, and immediately returned to his helpless friend. After a toilsome search, and an absence of twenty-one days, Carr at length discovered the apparently lifeless body of Rogers. On approaching it, the narrative states, that this faithful fellow-traveler first observed a rise of snow, and many tracks of a wolf leading to it. With a palpitating heart he went up to it, and saw a piece of buffalo-robe sticking out: stooping down, he discovered the gleaming eyes of his friend! He was still alive; but his feet were much frozen. His fire had gone out, and in attempting to make more his powder blew up. He was afraid his friend had been frozen, and despairing of life had rolled himself in his buffalo-robe and laid down. He was eight days without any kind of food, and was so exhausted that when the wolf started him in the face he was not able to make any exertion or noise to drive him away. Rogers was then conveyed to Hempstead, where he not only recovered his general health, but, strange to tell, the complete use of his limbs.

## Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosures, for such return.—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MSS."—MSS., which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MSS. as copy; third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note also paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, leaving off each page as it is written, and not waiting till its entire page number—a rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find it ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

We can not use "Nature's Music."—6 cents postage due: "Clouds and Sunshine;" "Katie's New Year;" "Bear Tree Hill;" "Benjamin Franklin;" "The Rocky Mountain Guide;" "A Scolded Hat;" "Old Foss and Feathers;" "Tom Cram's worth Love;" "The Prince in Tatters;" "Kickapoo John;" "A Holly Eve Romance;" "Grace and Grace;" "The Sexton's Story;" "Marshall O'Brien's Last Charge;" "Three in the Morning;" "Repose;" "Autumn Slights;" "A Rope of Sand;" "Maurice's Gold Dream."

For the following we can find place: "Cheating Destiny;" "The Bazaar Astrologer;" "The Black Avenger;" "The Cave Secret;" "A Friendly Foe;" the serial by H. B. G.; the sketches by C. S.; the poems by Miss A. L.

Have returned MS., "Secret of the Emerald Ring." F. B. STANFORD. Our letter of Oct. 1st is returned from the Brooklyn P. O. as "uncalled for."

R. M. G. T. Have written you; ditto Mrs. H. L. S. and Miss A. F.

Heavy Wood. Good Dialogues are available for the Dime Dialogues Series. They must be crisp and pungent as new celery.

JOHN THOMAS. A man can not escape the penalty of any crime by doing it in a hurry. He can be by extortion, be arrested here for crime committed in Great Britain. Naturalization here is no absolution for past sins. He could be arrested in Great Britain and dealt with according to law, if he should be caught there.

FRANK MILTON. Your question was answered, we believe. A letter addressed to the Chief of Police, New York City, will reach City Hall, and is the proper person to consult, if you have been swindled.

OLD AGE. See advertisement column (7th page) for the required information. The knowledge of so many delinquents. Any thing enough enough to remove hair must be injurious to the skin.

FRANK H. Cadets to West Point, and to the Annapolis Naval Academy, are to be named by the Congressman of your district.

BARBER. Pure olive or cocoanut oil makes the best liniment for greasy. Recipe for oil of roses: olive oil 2 pints; otto of roses 1 ounce; and belladonna 1 drachm. Mix.—A wash of vinegar water will remove burnt cork.—See answer to "Old Age" about a denigrator.

STUDENT. The word "foolscap," as applied to a certain sized sheet of paper, took its name from a very simple circumstance. Charles I. of England granted numerous charters to the support of the Government. Among others was the manufacture of paper. The watermark of the finest sort was the royal arms of England. The consumption of this article was great, and large quantities were made by those who purchased the exclusive right to vend it. Thus, among other monopolies, was set aside by the Parliament. The king, by way of showing his contempt for the king, they ordered the royal arms to be taken from the paper, and a bell and a cross to be substituted. It is now over 300 years since the foolscap was taken from the paper, but the paper still is of the size which the Parliament ordered for their journals and bears the name of the watermark placed there as an indignity to Charles.

WHANG. Capt. Mayne Reid's books in the Beadle's Dime Series are "Plunder Pirates," "The Hand," "Yellow Chief," "White Squaw," "The Scout," "Scalp Hunters" (2 vols.)—all written by the great romancer expressly for the Dime Novels Series except the last named. The last named is a romance, and has not been published. The story "Child Wife," was published as a serial in the London Standard, and has not, we think, been put in book form. Mayne Reid has not arranged to write for any other paper in this country than the SATURDAY JOURNAL. He is now in London and will remain there the coming winter.

YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER. It is a praiseworthy act on your part to undertake to be as economical as possible, and to save the money you are able to do some of your old light-colored dresses, and remake them, we give you the following receipts, which we think you will find of some use.

To color pink, take 3½ quarts of water, 2 ounces of cochineal and ½ ounce of cream tartar; wet the cloth in clear water, and put in the cochineal, which bring to a scalding heat, and after letting it remain in dye for a few moments it will be finished.

To color yellow, take 3 ounces of alum, 1 ounce of madder compound, and mix well; then boil 8 ounces of fabric one hour, in sufficient quantity of water to cover and wet the goods, and put in the dye and put in the alum compound and boil a few moments; then put in the cloth and boil for one hour; after rinsing in cold water, wash in soap suds, and wring out.

To color scarlet, take soft water and bring to a boiling heat; then put in 1½ ounces cream tartar for every pound of dye; boil a minute or two, and add 2 ounces powdered alum, and continue to boil compound; boil five minutes; wet the cloth in warm water, wring it out, and put into dye; after which boil one hour, and wring out.

To color green, add 3½ ounces of alum and one pound of fustic for every pound of cloth; then steep to get strong, but do not dye; then wring out the cloth in the dye until it acquires a good yellow; after which throw out the chips, and add the indigo compound slowly until you have the desired green shade.

LANGUIST. It is said of the different languages of the ancients that the Hebrew is the most poetic; the Latin is the most copious and sonorous, and the Greek is the most expressive and elevated, while in modern languages, the Chinese is the most difficult, the Italian is the softest, the Spanish the most pompous, the French the most elegant, the German, and the English is the most copious and energetic.

CENSUS-TAKER. The population of London was, in 1851, 2,835,384, which was an increase of 447,815 upon the increase in ten years of 447,815.

CALCULATOR. If you wish to ascertain the length of the day and night at any time of the year, add 12 hours to the time of the sun's setting, and from the time subtract the time of rising, this gives the length of the day. Subtract the time of setting from 12 hours, under the same conditions, and you will have the length of the night. These rules are true for apparent time.

LEAP-YEAR FAIR ONE. To find out regarding leap-years in the future, you must add 365 to the year number of which is divisible by 4, without a remainder, is a leap-year, except the last year of the century, which is a leap-year only when it can be divided by 400 without a remainder. Hence, the year 1900 will not be a leap-year.

MORDECAI. The following rules should be adopted in urgent cases. If a lady faints, let her be placed upon her back; if prostrated by a fall, drink a large quantity of salt water, with a spoonful of mustard stirred in, and then drink a cup of black coffee; to stop the bleeding of an ordinary cut, cover it with cobwebs, or with equal parts of flour and salt mixed.

WINE-LOVER. The wines of hot countries possess no odor; the best wines of France are odorous in a great degree, but in Rhine wines it is most intense.

FARMER'S BOY. Potatoes added to oats and hay form a good and wholesome diet for your work horses.

PHILOSOPHER. The growth of science is chiefly in, as you say, breaking down all superstitions. Before it all witchcraft and kindred beliefs must vanish. The occupation of the astrologer and fortune-teller is gone forever.

VANITY FAIR. You can assuredly clean your lace, but the process is not generally known. By the following you can render them as beautifully white and clean as they were when new. Lay out a dozen champagne bottles with old stockings sewed on to fit as tightly as possible. Whenever there is half an hour's leisure, take the soiled lace and bastie it carefully on the stocking-covered frame, taking care that every minute loop in the border is caught. The work is tedious, but necessary. When the lace is fastened, cover the bottle in hot suds made of fine soap, and change the cooling suds to hot several times a day. Or, if it be convenient, put the bottle in a boiler and let it boil two or three hours, when the lace will be quite clean. Set the bottle in the air and leave it till the lace is almost dry, which will take but little while. Then carefully rip off the lace and press it in a book for a few hours. It will come out spotless, not too white, and with the almost imperceptible stiffness which new lace has. With half a dozen bottles much cleaning can be done at once. Even the unmanageable point-lace emerges out unscathed from this process.

TRANSLATED questions on hand will appear next week.



## A TEAR IN SORROW WEPT.

BY L. C. GREENWOOD.

A tear in sorrow wept, means more than words  
That from the tongue in gentle accents blend;  
More than the sigh that sweeps the heart's deep  
chords,  
Which only cease to thrill when life doth end,  
And oft the only comfort it proves  
When all is dead the heart so fondly loves.  
A tear that's backward kept, pains more than  
dooms,  
Whose rust corrodes the soul with deep despair;  
And like a flower in its rarest bloom,  
Pines 'neath the weight it feels too much to bear;  
Oh, there is grief when tears have ceased to flow,  
They only leave the soul with burning woe.  
Blest are the tears that are in sorrow wept,  
They but discead our lives, when backward  
kept.

## Madame Durand's Proteges;

## THE FATEFUL LEGACY.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,  
AUTHOR OF "STRANGELY WEED," "CECIL'S DE-  
CEIT," "ADRIA THE ADOPTED," ETC., ETC.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## A TERRIBLE ACCUSATION.

The night express from Philadelphia  
dropped two passengers at Fairview station,  
which was situated a full mile and a half  
from the village proper.

There was a mail-wagon morning and  
evening driven out to meet the appropriate  
trains, but at nine p. m. no conveyance was  
at hand in the vicinity of the little isolated  
station-house. This much the two passen-  
gers ascertained, and consulting together,  
determined to walk the distance up the rug-  
ged road to the village.

"Dressed awkward to leave our luggage  
behind," said one, in a drawing, indolent  
tone. "One never finds accommodations in  
these country taverns, and I don't fancy  
being jumbled up indiscriminately with all  
sorts of people we're likely to meet. You'll  
be sure to send the trunks ahead in the  
morning?"

"Sure," promised the station-agent. The  
gentlemen should find them at the Fairview  
House by ten at the latest. Were they in-  
tending to stay long at the village?

"That depends," answered the one who  
seemed to have constituted himself spokes-  
man. "Any trout in the streams?"

"Plenty of 'em. Good accommodations,  
too, considering the difficulties of the situa-  
tion. Young gentlemen from the city often  
come out here for a few weeks in the sum-  
mer-time; but the place isn't stylish enough  
for the young ladies, bless their hearts! Not  
but we have some of our own in the section  
round about, though," added the voluble  
station-agent.

"We'll not trouble them, then," answered  
the passenger, with a laugh. "Truth to  
tell, we dropped down into these wilds to  
get out of the way of crinolines, for a time.  
Come, Drake, let's be moving, or we'll have  
to knock up the establishment, and I'm  
ravenous now. Suppose we carry our val-  
ises."

"Taking the light leather traveling-bags,  
and leaving two trunks to be sent after  
them, the late passengers took the road to  
the village. The first was young, and clad  
in a style rather pronounced, such as might  
pertain to a city clerk determined to create  
a sensation during the holidays. The man  
called Drake was of middle age, quieter in  
dress and of a manner reserved if not tacit-  
urn. He had the look of a respectable  
bookkeeper or bank employe.

The landlord of the Fairview House  
chanced to be entertaining some late guests,  
and a supper was served the newly-arrived  
travelers with less delay than might have  
been apprehended. While they were still  
at table, North dropped in and stood con-  
versing with the clerk behind the bar.

"Have something?" asked the latter.  
"A glass of your home-brewed. I'm not  
in the habit of indulging in stimulants, you  
know."

"Not to celebrate your good fortune?"  
asked the landlord, coming up at that mo-  
ment and slapping him on the back famili-  
arly. "Come, come, North! It's seldom  
enough we see you here; stand treat for the  
occasion, I say."

By this time the two men had quit the  
supper-table and joined the group in the  
outer room. North turned toward the bar-  
tender.

"Take the orders of the party," said he.  
"Cigars for me, please."

Drake also chose cigars when his time  
came around. North only waited to pay  
the reckoning, and was passing down the  
steps of the hotel porch when he was ac-  
cused by the elder traveler.

"A light, if you please. Ah, thank you.  
Is this your way? No intrusion to keep  
you company for a little way, I hope; I  
always smoke in the open air."

"Oh, no intrusion," North assured him.  
"But I stop just beyond here."

"Been coming into a fortune?" queried  
the stranger.

"Only a legacy—not large—five hundred  
dollars," explained the clerk, briefly. He  
was not so gratified with the bequest as he  
might have been had not the amount  
come to him over the head of the woman  
he loved, and was chary of alluding to the  
matter.

Drake made no further remark, however.  
He puffed contemplatively at his cigar until  
his companion paused with his hand upon  
the gate before Mr. Thancroft's dwelling.

"We part company here, I suppose?"  
said the clerk. "Good-night to you, sir!"

"Not quite," the other answered, with  
quiet assurance. "Show me in to Mr.  
Thancroft. It's not necessary to announce  
me."

North stared.  
"Can't you wait until office hours?" he  
asked. "I don't like to disturb my employ-  
er."

"He'll not count it a disturbance," an-  
swered Drake. "Besides, he's expecting me.  
Which way, and I'll not trouble you."

North swung open the house door, and  
struck a light in the long, narrow hall.

"The second door to the left, straight  
ahead," he said, and held the candle aloft  
to throw its flickering gleam upon the way.

At the same moment the door opened  
from within, and framed the lawyer in the  
glow from the large arched lamp which put  
to shame the wavering candle rays.

"You are punctual," said he, standing  
aside to let his late visitor pass; and then  
nodded his dismissal to North.

The door closed again, and the clerk took  
his way up a flight of narrow stairs in the  
rear of the hall to his single apartment  
above. He had grown singularly grave in  
the last moment or two. That long consul-

tation over the dead body of Madame Du-  
rand, had not been kept private as the par-  
ticipants in it could have wished, and the  
surmises freely bandied about assisted him  
to arrive at the true nature of the business  
which had brought a visitor at this unusual  
hour, in this apparently preconceived man-  
ner.

"Heaven grant nothing may come of it,"  
he muttered, to himself, uneasily. "I don't  
know why I should fear any thing even at  
the worst, but if there's been foul play  
there'll be foul work before it's unmasked.  
I can't help wishing that some one but me  
had brought that man here."

One who had not fathomed his thoughts  
might have fancied North grown suddenly  
notional. The stay of the visitor below was  
limited; and in the days that succeeded, he  
and his companion strictly followed the  
programme that was expected of them—  
trouting and gunning with indifferent suc-  
cess; making some casual acquaintances  
about the village, smoking, drinking pale  
ale, and discussing neighborhood gossip  
with the landlord of the Fairview House,  
who was favorably inclined toward these  
well-ordered lodgers.

And at the manse there had been little  
change since the gloom attendant upon the  
late sorrowful occasion had settled over the  
household. The badges of mourning were  
worn by all its members, but further than  
that, and the void left by the absence of the  
familiar mistress—a void which to those  
who had long been accustomed to the gro-  
tesque little figure, the sharp sound of the  
ebony stick ringing at intervals through the  
paved corridors; the keen eyes that kept  
close surveillance over the whole domain,  
and the imperious will of the madame,  
could not readily be filled.

A maiden sister of Dr. Gaines had taken  
up her abode at the manse, in the capacity  
of companion to the two young ladies, and  
as a conciliator to Mrs. Grundy, who is  
ever on the look-out for any breach of  
social etiquette.

A week had passed since the reading of  
the will, and Lucian Ware had not since  
made his appearance at the manse. Fay,  
recovered now from the first bitterness of  
her disappointment, though by no means  
reconciled to her meager apportionment,  
felt his absence with a growing sense of  
indignation and resentment. She was im-  
patient for the sympathy which she consid-  
ered was her just claim from him, and  
nervously restless until she should receive  
assurance of his faith, which she had too  
much belief in her own witching fascina-  
tions to doubt—although she was not  
madame's heiress.

But, a week after the reading of the will,  
Ware came up from the office, ostensibly  
to carry some message to Valere; to take  
observations, and gain certain information  
regarding facts that were of vital import  
to him.

This week, during which he had held  
himself aloof from them all, had been one  
of bitter strife, wearing desires, maddening,  
passion-inspired impulses, held this far in  
check by that tense will which had never  
yielded to any mastering power until Mir-  
abel Durand all unconsciously filled his in-  
tense—albeit cruelly selfish—capacity for  
idolatrous worship.

Now his spirit was panting within him  
for a glimpse of her; he would have sacri-  
ficed much of worldly interest to only  
touch her hand and hear words of passing  
kindness fall from her lips; he would have  
risked his chances for this world and the  
next, to have poured out the strong fervor  
of his love, and plead, as only his specious  
tongue could plead, for a meet return, with  
but the slightest hope of success.

But, he could quell the wild tumult  
which rose within him; he could come up  
through the grounds to the manse, creeping  
where she might recently have walked,  
drinking in the fragrance of the flowers  
which, now that the madame was no more,  
she had made her especial care, occupy the  
room where she might recently have sat,  
and yet command the impulse which would  
have urged him to seek her presence and  
wreck his fondest hopes by a premature  
burst of passionate appeal.

He could be patient, crafty, calculating.  
So he sent up no message to Mirabel  
Durand except as included in his respects  
to "the ladies," but scribbled a few words  
upon a card to be delivered to Miss St.  
Orme.

He went alone into the silent parlor to  
await her coming, and a moment later she  
glided in, with a soft radiance touching her  
face.

Ware stood before a window, passive  
and cold, looking worn and haggard.  
"Ah, dilatory lover!" she said, reproach-  
fully, crossing to his side.

He let her hand rest passively upon his  
palm, then bowed and relinquished it.

"Whatever else Miss St. Orme may num-  
ber in the catalogue of her faults, dilatory  
action is not one of them. You were prompt  
very prompt, Miss St. Orme; and how  
little you were mortified, after all!"

Fay regarded him strangely, but with a  
soft smile gradually dimpling about her  
pouting lips, beaming even in its burden of  
tender solicitude.

"My poor Lucian! My dear boy, how  
wretchedly you are looking. How that  
miserable business has told upon you—how  
you must have worried over it all. See  
how like a Spartan heroine I have borne  
the test, though I nearly died of disappoint-  
ment just at first. We can afford to wait,  
Lucian."

He dropped his face over her with bitter,  
sneering scrutiny, but Fay smiled back at  
him with apparent frank innocence.

Ware broke into a discordant laugh.

"Ha, ha! what an innocent dove you  
are, fair Fay! How sweetly you coo, and  
how unfinchingly you have passed the  
 ordeal! Who would ever suspect you of  
possessing venomous claws?"

She pouted her pretty lips like some  
spoiled child.

"Now, you are trying to be provoking.  
I'll not have you picking a quarrel with me,  
do you hear, Mr. Lucian?"

Ware stood up with folded arms and  
darkened face.

"Pray, drop the mask, Miss St. Orme.  
This by-play might be made amusing, but  
time is limited with me. You did your  
work well, I repeat."

"Then it's something new in my experi-  
ence," Fay retorted, airily. "Explain  
yourself if it is of sufficient consequence.  
I'm sure I don't know what you're aiming  
at. First, place me a chair, please; no, not  
that horrid concern; it would crush all the  
flonies of my new crape mourning dress."

Ware was seated, and withdrew a  
couple of paces.

"I confess to being outdone," he said.  
"I could not carry myself so bravely."

"Do be agreeable, Lucian. You've not  
uttered a single pretty sentiment since I  
came down. If you're wondering why I'm  
not in tears and pale with sorrow on account  
of the madame, candidly, between you and  
I, it's simply because she failed being  
magnificent enough to pay me for the trou-  
ble."

Lucian looked at her, almost in doubt.  
"You got the vial?" he asked.

"The little one with the gold tube?—oh,  
yes," Fay slivered a little, and the mellow  
light of her wonderful eyes changed to  
glittering green points. "How fortunate  
there was no need of it!"

"Bah!" cried Lucian Ware, in mocking  
disbelief. "Deceive all the world as you  
see fit, but don't try to blind me. It was a  
sorry reward, wasn't it, for staining that  
fair little hand with so foul a crime as—  
poisoning?"

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE COMPACT BROKEN.

"You are wrong," cried Fay, with angry  
impatience. "I never did it, I say—there  
was no need. If there had been—if ma-  
dame had been sure of living a score of  
years without—I never could have done it.  
I knew that when I was put to the test."

"Tell it to the winds," mocked Ware.  
"Is it the truth, Lucian, believe me.  
When the woman you sent came out of the  
shrubbery that night and beckoned to me  
as I stood alone by my sitting-room window,  
I crept out stealthily to meet her as she  
seemed to wish. I had no idea of what her  
object might be, and never thought that she  
had come from you until her own words  
told me so."

"She drew the vial from her bosom, say-  
ing as she did so, in a hurried, whispering  
way:

"There, take that! One drop from the  
vial filtered through the tube will bring  
Lucian Ware's Fate upon her. Don't be afraid  
madame's Fate upon her. Don't be afraid  
—I come from Lucian, and it is his will  
has given you this to do."

"She thrust the vial into my hand, and  
moved away silently as if she had been a  
ghost. I was taken by surprise, and had  
no time to question her, had I been dis-  
posed. I loitered out there in the shrub-  
bery for a little while, facing the tempta-  
tion which you had put before me. I was  
reckless and daring enough, but with the  
means to accomplish such a deed, I felt  
that I never could take away madame's  
life."

"If I had hated her, I might have con-  
tinued to feel all that I said to you when I  
was excited and angered at the thought  
that our plans might be baffled as they  
have been since. But I had no cause to  
hate Madame Durand. I did hope that she  
might die, for I thought then I would be  
mistress of all Fairview, but I could not do  
her harm, even for that."

"It had grown quite dark when I went  
in, and—I found the confusion which  
stunned and rejoiced me at once when they  
told me that she was dead. Dead with-  
out any aid of mine, I swear to you, Lu-  
cian."

He looked down upon her sneeringly,  
unbelieving still. Himself an adept in de-  
ceptive arts, unhesitating, remorseless, and  
reading her more shallow selfish nature by  
his own, he thought this only a cleverly-  
acted subterfuge to cover the hideousness  
of guilt, which will strike some horror to  
even those who do not shrink from the  
stain of it.

"What a tragedienne you would make!"  
said he. "Do you stay on here at the  
manse, Miss St. Orme?"

"Yes, of course, for a year and a day;  
and even then I fancy the proud mistress  
of the place will scarcely turn me away."

"Lucian!"

He had ground out an oath between his  
set teeth as her words brought before him  
a vision of Mirabel queening it there—the  
stately mistress of Fairview, the sweet  
bride of his rival.

"As Heaven hears me, never!"

"What is it, Lucian? You frighten  
me."

Fay put up her hands to clasp his arm  
timidly. Oh, the power of love, that could  
so transform the coquette who had never  
known a generous emotion, or felt a thrill  
of sympathy for the victims of her pretty  
wiles! Was this retribution coming home  
to her?

Ware shook her clinging hands roughly  
off.

"For Heaven's sake, be done with such  
foolery! You and I played our part to-  
gether—and lost. We are done with each  
other—you and I."

"Lucian, Lucian! You never mean  
that. You could not be so heartlessly  
cruel. The knowledge of your love makes  
me bear my own disappointment more  
calmly, and enables me to look ahead over  
our probationary term to a humbler state  
than I could before this have contemplated.  
We must wait for a time, you know, for  
my prudence will stop when I marry;  
but I have planned out the future in a very  
different way since I saw you last."

"When Valere has once fulfilled the  
conditions of madame's will, you can easily  
secure the position which he now holds. I  
am sure that he and Mirabel will prove  
generous enough to give you a handsome  
salary which shall be adequate to our  
wants."

Fay fairly shrank under the burning fire  
of his glance.

"You are slow to comprehend," he said,  
with scornful contempt. "The marriage  
of convenience we contemplated is quite a  
breath of the past—there's no more of it.  
Affairs have changed all that, you see."

"Do you mean that it was only ma-  
dame's wealth you wooed me for, or are  
you sacrificing heart-promptings to am-  
bition now?"

Breathlessly she awaited his answer. It  
came, derisive, cutting, cruel in its undis-  
guised disdain.

"I might have married you had it all  
turned out as we expected, although I am  
not even sure of that now. If it had come  
so, my only allurements would have been  
my prudence and his host of outlying farms.  
My heart and soul could have owed allegi-  
ance then as now to only one—and that  
one never you, Miss St. Orme."

"Who?" she demanded, so quietly that  
he was deceived by her assumed calmness.

"Who should it be but incomparable  
Mirabel Durand?"

"Oh, happy Mirabel!" said Fay, in that  
same quiet way. "And will she be for the  
second time renounce the Durand estates,  
cheat the heir of madame's choosing of the  
inheritance, and with her thirty thousand  
dollars, her casket of priceless jewels and  
her proud beauty, condescend to bless the  
poor student of a miserable little country

lawyer? Will Valere and Fairview have  
no influence with her, think you?"

"She shall never marry him, never,  
never!" said Ware, turning pale with the  
strength of his suppressed passion. "I shall  
not fail to win her yet, peerless Mirabel!"

"Oh, peerless Mirabel!" cried Fay, in  
panting mockery, unable longer to repress  
her pent-up passion. "But the other day it  
was—'Lovely Fay! Irresistible Fay!' You  
see, your words were sweet enough to make  
me cherish them. How you loved me—in  
protest! What sacrifices you would make  
were I only penniless Miss St. Orme; no  
condition could alter you or cause you to  
waver in truth to me! But a little more  
than a week ago, and now—

"Oh, man, man! what stuff do you sup-  
pose we are made of that you could treat  
any woman so?"

"Pray, do not indulge in heroics, Miss  
St. Orme. scenes are always detestable,"  
observed Lucian, coldly.

Fay turned to face him, her small, grace-  
ful figure quivering with angry agitation,  
her face colorless, her eyes scintillating  
with baleful green glitter.

She raised her little white hand, clenched  
until the blood seemed ready to burst from  
the delicate finger-nails, and her voice came  
hoarse and strange beyond recognition.

"Hear me, Lucian Ware! You shall  
never wed with Mirabel Durand. I swear  
it, surely as there is a Heaven above us.  
You have subjected me to the bitterest hu-  
miliation a woman can know. You raised  
in me the power of a passion which can be  
strong, alike in love or hate. You have  
treated me with contempt; you have scorned  
the love that would have induced me to  
face a life of poverty with you; you have  
put another woman before me, and pictured  
as immaculate, throwing the darker  
shade of contrast over me. And yet I love  
you, I love you still, Lucian Ware; but I  
hate Mirabel Durand with all the intensity  
of my soul."

"You put power in my hands when you  
caused me to receive that little gold-tubed  
vial with its deadly contents. I would  
never have used it on poor old Madame  
Durand, but I warn you, if you care for the  
safety of lovely Mirabel, tempt me no fur-  
ther than you have done this day."

"Sooner than see you wed with her, my  
hand should send you both down to perdition."

He laughed, with incredulous disdain.

"Ah, that would be too perilous. I never  
doubt that you would strike in the dark if  
you could, but never where the consequence  
would inevitably recoil upon your own fair  
head."

"And now that you remind me of it, you  
may find it safest to return that vial. It  
may prove a tell-tale thing some day."

"Give it to you?—oh, no! I must have  
some weapon to combat those schemes of  
yours, and none more effective than the  
pretty toy you were free enough to intrust  
with me."

And with that Miss St. Orme flashed out  
of his sight, to speed away to her private  
chamber, and double-locking the door,  
threw herself upon the bed and gave scope  
to the overpowering passion which possessed  
her, in her usual uncontrollable way.

Left alone, Lucian Ware leaned over the  
back of a heavy old chair, lost in gloomy  
meditation.

"Would she dare?" he asked himself.  
"What will not a woman dare in a frenzy  
of love, and fierce, vindictive hate? I must  
find some means to get the vial away from  
her; but how?—that is the question. She  
will not give it up willingly to any one  
now."

No light came into his moody face as he  
reflected. He took up his hat at last and  
was passing out, when he saw Milly Ross  
in the court, a pair of large scissors in her  
hand, with which she was trimming the  
sere leaves from the various shrubs. He  
called to her as he stood in the open door,  
and she came at once, a little flush tingling  
the face which was even thinner and paler  
than its usual wont.

"You've been a long time gone, for you,  
Mr. Lucian," she said, quietly. "You're  
not looking well, either, sir. I think there's  
trouble come to all of us through the loss  
of the madame."

"A grievous disappointment to you,  
Milly."

"I didn't deserve any thing better, and  
I'm not grieving over having nothing left  
to me. But I do regret having lost the con-  
fidence of my mistress just at the last, being  
unworthy of it, I mean."

She spoke in a dreary way, which told  
how it had been weighing upon her mind.

"Well, that's all past now! I must ask  
you to do me a favor, Milly."

He paused a moment to concoct some  
plausible pretext for the part he wished her  
to perform. An idea occurred to him al-  
most immediately.

"I have just permitted myself, through  
lack of forethought, to part with a very  
powerful sedative drug, which I must re-  
gain in some way, Milly. Miss St. Orme,  
when I chanced to meet in here, was com-  
plaining of nervousness and unrest; I gave  
her the vial, very thoughtlessly, for I fancy  
she is not the proper sort of person to be in-  
trusted with any thing of that nature. I  
have remembered since that Doctor Gaines  
would not prescribe morphia in her hyster-  
ical attack, and this mixture contains a large  
proportion of opium. I have used it my-  
self a few times, but not often on that ac-  
count."

"Now, I wish you to watch your chance  
and secrete the vial without the young  
lady's knowledge. Doctor Gaines tells me  
she is threatened with some form of mono-  
mania, which quiet indulgence may avert;  
so it may be best not to agitate her by ex-  
plaining the deleterious nature of the drug  
I so thoughtlessly placed in her hands."

"You can not make any mistake; the  
vial is very small, fitted into a gold tube  
with a crystal stopper. If you can get it  
out of sight, Miss St. Orme may never  
think of it again."

"It is yours, you say?" questioned Milly  
Ross.

"Yes. I will come to meet you to-night,  
or to-morrow night at furthest, at our old  
trysting-place. You'll bring it to me there,  
and be very careful, Milly."

"As you say, Mr. Lucian."

He had not calculated amiss in his su-  
position of Fay's careless habits. Ross was  
waiting-maid to the two young ladies now,  
and that same afternoon, when she went to  
dress Miss St. Orme for the late dinner,  
she discovered the gold-tubed vial in one of  
that young lady's toilet-boxes.

She dropped it unobserved into the  
pocket of her mourning dress, but some  
subtle fascination it seemed to possess  
caused her to take it out and study it  
curiously as she turned it about in her

hand on the first occasion when she found  
herself quite alone.

She had gone into the reception-room to  
close it for the day. It had been one of  
madame's customs to have this apartment  
punctually closed at five in the afternoon,  
and Ross still scrupulously performed the  
duty.

A shadow darkened one of the windows,  
and thrusting the vial nervously back into  
its concealment, she glanced up apprehen-  
sively. A man, dressed in common la-  
borer's clothes, with a florid complexion  
and flaming red hair, was crossing the pi-  
azza toward the entrance-door.

With a relieved sigh, Milly turned to the  
completion of her task.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 134.)

## The Wronged Heiress:

## The Vultures of New York.

BY RETT WINWOOD.

AUTHOR OF "THE WHITE SPECTER," "WHO WAS  
SHE?" "RAFFLES," OR, "THE DEBENTURE PROP-  
ERTY," "THE DANGEROUS WOMAN,"  
"TWO LOVES," "MIRIAM BRE-  
VOST'S SECRET," ETC.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## UNEARTHING THE TRUTH.

At an early hour of the afternoon, our  
little party reached Woodlawn.

Philip ascended the steps with a proud,  
firm tread, holding the trembling figure of  
Mabel Trevor clasped closely to his side.

"Courage," he whispered. "You have  
naught to fear, my darling. Whatever  
turn events may take I promise to protect  
you with my own life, if necessary."



boy, whom I had put out to nurse, for I was very poor, and my mistress had promised to pay me well."

"Where is he now?"

"You have seen him," said Mrs. Pratt, "flushing up, and then growing paler than before."

"Gilbert Belmont is my son. But he did not know this until yesterday."

"Then I told him the truth. And he kept it from him because I knew he was proud and ambitious. I thought he would not like to acknowledge such a mother. But, thank God, it was all a mistake. He owns me and loves me at last."

"She bowed her head for a moment, tears gushing plentifully from her eyes. Both Mabel and Philip comprehended now the nature of the strange power Belmont had seemed to possess over this woman. They pitied quite as much they condemned her."

"But it was the story of the past that I came here to tell," she resumed, after a long pause. "I tell you that I was poor, and ambitious for my own. It was my poverty and ambition that led me on to guilt. A man who called himself Bill Cuppings came to me and tempted me with a heavy bribe. I was to take my charge, the little Mabel, out for a walk near the river one day, and there resign her to his keeping, and then pretend to my master that she had fallen into the river and been drowned. He solemnly swore to me that no harm should be offered the child, and that she would only be detained from her parents for a few years, and then restored."

"At last I consented. I gave him the child. That same day my mistress fell suddenly ill and died before night. I suspected foul play of some sort. But I was too frightened to speak out my mind. And after two or three days of torture I fled from the scene with my guilty secret still weighing upon my mind."

"That is all I have to say except that I fully believe Mabel Trevor to be the same girl whom I resigned to the tender mercies of Bill Cuppings some many years ago. My secret has cost me much pain and torture. I am glad it is told at last."

"Mr. Laundersdale had listened like one in a dream, his arms tightening in their pressure about Mabel's figure, as the recital proceeded."

"What do you mean," he demanded, in a horror-stricken voice, at its conclusion, "by insinuating that my wife did not die a natural death?"

"Mrs. Pratt shuddered and began to tremble."

"Perhaps I should not have said that," she exclaimed. "I know nothing positively. But I could not help linking, in my own mind, the two events of that day. It seemed as if some terrible but powerful enemy were working against you."

"The wretched man's head dropped on his breast."

"Ah, merciful Heaven!" he moaned. "What if this should be true?—what if it should be true?"

"In the next breath he added:

"Ring the bell, Philip. The Bill Cuppings of whom this woman has spoken is now in the house. If he knows any thing of this matter, he shall be compelled to speak the truth."

"Philip had just turned to comply with Jasper Laundersdale's request, when the room door opened and Marcia Denvil, June Bart and Bill Cuppings himself entered the apartment."

"Behind these three there came also a fourth individual."

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE HOUR OF DEFEAT.

The last comer was none other than Miles Duff.

He had entered the house unperceived by everybody, and had quietly followed in the rear of the little party that had been attracted to the library by the suspicion that something unusual was transpiring there."

"Thus strangely had the leading characters of our story been drawn together in that room."

"What is the meaning of this scene?" demanded Marcia Denvil, pausing near the center of the apartment."

She had caught sight of Mabel, pressed close to the wildly-beating heart of Jasper Laundersdale."

"The two brothers, Miles and Bill—brothers in infancy as well as by blood—had also seen the girl, and at the same moment."

"They drew back at first, as if considerably disturbed. This was the first time they had seen Mabel since she had fled from Slaughter-house Point and the cruelty of Old Her."

"Vainly had they sought some clue to her place of refuge. And now they could scarcely credit the evidence of their senses, which said that there she was, at last, right before them, and in the arms of the very man from whom they were pledged to keep her separated."

"Miles instantly recovered his usual composure, however. Nobody had answered Marcia's question, and he suddenly pushed past her, and confronted Mrs. Laundersdale."

"The guilty woman saw him at last. Her eyes widely dilated, her face blanched to the ashen hue of a corpse, and the cold darts of fear stood out in beads upon her brow."

"Haunted!" came in a choking cry from her trembling lips."

Miles laughed—a low, harsh laugh, scarcely pleasant to listen to."

"Calm your fears, my dear Martha," he said, mockingly. "I didn't come from the other world, as you seem to imagine. In fact, you didn't succeed in sending me there when you made the attempt."

She only cowered further and further away from him, as if she would gladly have shrunk into the very wall itself."

"The truth is," he went on, in a low tone of brooding hate, "you overdid the matter—put too big a dose of poison in the wine you gave me to drink. It acted as an emetic. My cries were heard, and help came, for all you fastened the doors so securely behind you. I have found the strength to crawl to this place—though I am still very weak. Can you guess why I have come? Can you guess?"

The last words were hissed between his close-shut teeth. Mrs. Laundersdale raised her head and stared at him stupidly. Her lips moved as if she were trying to speak, but no intelligible sound came from them."

"I have come to punish you for your treachery," hissed Miles, glaring at her with a look of fiendish hatred. "You were afraid of me, were you, and meant to put me out of the way? It does not surprise me. But you'll find that two can play at that sort of a game."

Then, wheeling round so that he faced the whole company, he added, more calmly:

"I have a confession to make, good friends. Yonder trembling woman, who calls herself Mrs. Laundersdale, has no right to the name! She is my wife!"

The guilty creature found voice at last. "It is false!" she shrieked, wildly flinging up her hands."

"It is true," said Miles, quietly. "I married her more than twenty years ago, under the name of Richard Denvil!"

There was an awed silence in the room after that. Bill Cuppings broke it."

"You?" he cried, in a tone of deep amazement. "Are you Richard Denvil?"

"That is one of my aliases," Miles answered. "You didn't know it before? Well, that isn't strange. I've passed under a good many names in my day that I did not confide to you, my worthy brother."

Besides, you and I were separated at a time when I wooed and won Martha, and she lived with me as my wife. She played minor parts in some of the lower grade of theaters until our little daughter was born. Shortly afterward we agreed to separate, and I had lost sight of my loving wife until a few weeks since, when you, Bill, brought me to Woodlawn."

A low cry came from Marcia's lips. She crept close to her mother's side."

"Is that man my father?" she demanded. "Has he spoken the truth?"

The wretched woman looked slowly round the room. She read horror and condemnation in every eye, and knew that all was lost."

"Yes!" she cried, starting up, and flushing purple. "That fiend has spoken the truth. Denial on my part would be useless, I suppose. He is my husband. But I hoped and believed that he was dead, until he came to Woodlawn a few weeks since. I confess to everything. He was in my way, and I sought to poison him. Ah, you look horrified, Jasper. But that man had driven me desperate. While he lived, I was like a person walking on a bridge of glass. I knew it. I had learned to love ease, and luxury, and position, since having been made your wife. I did not mean to give them up."

She paused. Miles glared at her vindictively. "Go on," he said, in a low, deep voice. "I am sure there is very much more that ought to be told."

She shivered from head to foot as if a cold blast had blown upon her."

"Have you not humiliated me enough?" she moaned. "For the love of Heaven, spare me!"

"I will not. This is my revenge—and, it is sweet!"

"Listen," she said, covering her face with two trembling hands. "Jasper Laundersdale, what I have to say now concerns you more than anybody else. I had seen you long before your wife died, though you did not know that such a woman as myself had an existence at the time. You were rich and courted. I coveted your wealth and position. I determined to attain them."

Bill Cuppings was my agent when he lured me with Mrs. Pratt for the disappearance of the little Mabel. That was the first stroke I made. Your wife died suddenly and mysteriously."

Jasper Laundersdale suddenly sprang to his feet."

"Tell me no more!" he cried, in a voice of horror. "Woman, fiend, tell me no more!"

Mrs. Laundersdale looked at Miles, a weary though half-satisfied smile curling her lips. "Are you satisfied now?" she said. "Is your thirst for vengeance appeased? If so, I have no need to say more."

"You are a ruined woman, traitress," he sneered. "I am content."

She smiled again, then swiftly turned her back upon them all. A shivering of glass was heard between their teeth. Then she swung round again, a strange, unnatural pallor on her face."

"I have been fooled and baffled on every side," she said. "But nobody shall triumph in my defeat. I prefer death to disgrace."

Then, a bold, daring woman to the last, she staggered and fell forward, rudely pushing away the hands that would have held her up. There was scarcely a struggle—scarcely a quiver of the eyelids, and yet she was dead. She had perished by her own hand."

A few last words, and our story is done. Philip married Mabel, and the young couple still reside at Woodlawn with Jasper Laundersdale, very happy in each other, and doing all in their power to wear the wretched old man from the remembrance of his sorrow."

They will eventually succeed, perhaps, but the wound was deep and terrible, and only time can heal it entirely."

He is passionately fond of Mabel, his new-found daughter, and in her tries to live once again the broken romance of his youth, before that unprincipled woman ever crossed his path."

Marcia left Woodlawn immediately after the burial of her mother. She was pressed to remain, but would not. Her pride had received a death-blow, and the scene of her prosperous days became utterly hateful to her. She had no other wish than to sever every link that bound her to the disgraceful past."

Mrs. Pratt offered her a home, and she accepted. She was with Gilbert Belmont—as he still calls himself—during his long convalescence. At last she married him, and they removed to France, where they still reside on the banks of one of its sunny rivers, trying to forget all that was wrong and wicked in their past lives, and to atone for it by doing good in the present."

Mrs. Pratt is with them, loved and revered by both; for they know the power of the temptation under which she erred, and are bound to be merciful."

Richard Morton, otherwise Dick Daredevil, married the ballet-girl, Julia. Both have quitted the stage for good. In short, Dick has been set up in business in one of our Western cities through the kindness of Philip Jocelyn, and is now a good and prosperous citizen."

Bill Cuppings fled to Montana, and his fate is still one of the secrets of the future."

Jane Bart may have followed him. At any rate, her neck face was suddenly missed from Woodlawn, and nothing has ever been heard from her."

Her Bender still pursues the "uneven" tenor of her way at Slaughter-house Point, and seems to be fonder than ever of Hand and Saddle."

Retributive justice has not yet overtaken her. But the day of her sorrow can not now be far distant."

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## The Red Scorpion:

OR, THE BEAUTIFUL PHANTOM.

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AUTHOR OF "FLAMING TALLMAN," "BLACK CRESCENT," "WOODWIND," "REVENUES," "THE HUNCHBACK," "PEARL OF TEARLS," ETC., ETC., ETC."

## CHAPTER XX.

INTO the chamber of death—its awful shadows and voiceless sighs—stepped Lorilyn St. Clair.

Karl Kurtz sat near the bed. He neither saw nor heard her."

The blow had fallen; and the man, once strong and stern, who felt keenly his irreparable loss, trembled in his weakness—both of body and spirit—and never did sorrowing child weep tears like his."

Alone with the dead, he sat; anguish-torn, oblivious to the things around him, he heeded not the flight of time—bowing there beside the senseless clay of one now looking down upon the world and him, from where the "starry globes" wet the lips of blest immortals."

Uncle.

The one word came from Lorilyn in a hushed whisper, as if she scarce dared to break the pervading stillness."

But there was no answering voice; Karl Kurtz wept on, unmindful of her presence."

The picture brought back to memory the days of childhood, the sunny hours made twice happy by the kindness of the departed one; the gentle clay, the loving words, the fond caress, the sacrifices made to youth's enigma whims—all, all rose up, in one sweet recollection of the past, and fixed their influence in her heart."

Her full bosom heaved; the lustre eyes were riveted on those death-cold features; like a lovely statue, whose subtle charms were screened, she stood, she gazed—yet not a tear to kiss the beauty of her cheek, not one crystal drop from that mysterious fount, whose gush betrays soul-deep emotion."

"Uncle," she said, in a low, deep voice, "I am sure there is very much more that ought to be told."

She shivered from head to foot as if a cold blast had blown upon her."

"Have you not humiliated me enough?" she moaned. "For the love of Heaven, spare me!"

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## CHAPTER XXI.

OLD Cyr, the negro, lay in a side room at the Ox.

The murdered man was a great favorite with those who frequented the tavern, and the men who now—drawn by the news, which had spread like wild-fire—hastened to the scene, spoke their feelings plain and loud."

The two young farmers we have mentioned, who were talking with O'Connell when Carew and Dyke Ronel came in, cast a peculiar look after the two last named as they departed."

"Who is that?" asked one, addressing the Irishman in an undertone."

"Him, is it? Which was a 'y' mane?"

"He who wears the beard."

"Well, I don't know, then; on'y he came down to Birdwood while back, an' it's there ever since he's stop'd."

"You don't know his name?" inquired the companion of the first speaker—a short, broad, muscular fellow, whose face was not naturally as smooth as it appeared."

"His name? Be the powers! I've that same on the leaf av me book. He stop'd a bit here. Will ye look at it?"

"Yes, if you please."

They exchanged glances. Jerry laid the enormous ledger before them, and whisked over the leaves in a business-like manner."

"Sure, I'm thinkin' 'e's a gentleman, every inch," he said, half aloud, as he searched for the name. "It's a bould pen 'e swings, an' it's a foine name 'e has. But, then, maybe ye know 'im?—there it is, now; look at that."

They read the name of Vincent Carew, and, underneath it, that of Dyke Ronel."

"Much obliged," said the short, muscular man."

"It's welcome ye are," returned Jerry, as he put away the book on the shelf behind him."

"And now you may give us something to drink."

"Will ye have a 'lightnin' or a sars-p'll?' I've the best av every thing, an' can put ye to sleep 'th' soul's delight."

"Whisky?"

"A bit that's the kind to give the bar its glory! There ye are—an' it's the rarest juice av sweetness for killin' the blues!"

back, exhausted, in his chair, and closed his aching eyes, she left him—left him in uncertainty as to what would be her course—and turned in the direction of her own apartment."

"Ay, God help him," she thought. "Vincent Carew has, indeed, a powerful hold upon the threats uttered in the parlor were not idle ones. But it is strange: if uncle was so careful in revising the document, which would have betrayed him long ago, why has he not seen that this wicked man, Vincent Carew, is my half-brother?"

Were I to proclaim our relationship, and prove the utter impossibility of our marriage, to what expenses would his angry disappointment lead him? Uncle must be saved! How—how can it be done?"

As she reached the landing, she paused. She heard the thunder of horsehoofs upon the drive, and voices in the hall below."

Presently some one spoke sharply to the stable, who came up to take charge of the horses; then they entered the house—now they were ascending the stairs."

A single glance discovered who it was. She drew back into the welcome shadow of a niche, and in another moment Vincent Carew and his specter-like follower passed her concealment."

She saw by the dim light of the entry lamp, that Carew's face wore a dark, fierce expression; that his eyes were bloodshot and glaring; that he was absorbed in thought."

She watched them till they disappeared around a turn in the hall, and, descending to the second floor, continued on to her own apartment."

A dressing-maid was there, dozing and nodding in a chair."

She would not have aroused her; but seated herself beside the unique center-table, raised one elbow to its checkered leaf, and bowed her head until it rested on the jewels of her hand."

"Miss Lorilyn! is it you?" exclaimed the girl, sleepily, starting up and rubbing her eyes."

"Yes, it is I," was the absent answer. "Will you disrobe, Miss? Shall I—?"

"No, Lena—no; leave me to myself. You may retire."

"Retire? Why, Miss, it's early yet. You may want me."

"No, I shall not want you. Go—I wish to be alone."

And when alone, she pondered on the hour's gloom."

She seemed to hear again the loud threats of Vincent Carew; and she thought also of the confession she had listened to from her uncle."

The load was heavy that weighed upon her mind; the mazes hovered thick across imagination's path."

Minutes multiplied as she sat in lone silence there; she caught not the sound of the clock-stroke as it pealed forth its gauge of time, and told the night's advance."

Ten of the clock! Another stillness had settled in the mansion. It was the hour of sleep."

Then, through the grave-like silence, broke a faint, yet startling noise."

Quick as the deer that scents a danger at its side, she sprang from the chair, and bent her ear in breathless listening."

Again it came—a scraping, scratching sound; something fell, with a twirl and a dart, at her feet."

She glanced up to the ceiling, and, as she did so, it was only by a mighty effort she forced back a cry already molded on her lips."

The Birdwood mansion was built with a view to consuming all space. Directly over her apartment was a store-room, which, in times past, no doubt, held its full of dainties. It was but a small affair—created by an architect who imagined a possible usefulness of such an arrangement—and only accessible from Lorilyn's room, by ladder, through a large trap-door."

Toward this trap-door her eyes had turned; and it was what she saw there that sent a shiver through her veins and held her riveted."

Slowly the trap was moving upward, opening like the yawn of some great mouth. That it was the action of human hands was evident. But, who was in that room overhead?—how came they there?—what were they about to do?"

For a second she was powerless to move; then a sense of peril broke the spell that bound her, and she ran to the door."

## CHAPTER XXII.

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The two young farmers we have mentioned, who were talking with O'Connell when Carew and Dyke Ronel came in, cast a peculiar look after the two last named as they departed."

"Who is that?" asked one, addressing the Irishman in



over to the ready stables, with a sharp, brisk command. Then he entered the house.

Rouel, his shadow, followed silently. When they had passed the parlor, the ball-like head of Thaddeus Gimp appeared around the door-jamb, and the pale, blue eyes gazed after the retreating pair.

"Mr. Gimp, what is the meaning of this movement? Why not have seized them at once?"

It was Oscar Storms who spoke, and his words were uttered in a tone of excitement.

Gimp wheeled, grasped him by the arm, and placing a finger to his lips, said:

"I wouldn't do. He's in a bad humor. See him frown? A bad humor with him is a dangerous humor. He'd fight worse than twenty others! Somebody get hurt. Don't think I'm afraid!—no! Oh, no! I've another plan. I won't do to give him a chance—he'd slip. I'll take more than two to capture that Bengal tiger!"

"But, what are you going to do?" as the lawyer started out in the hall.

"Wait for me. Don't go to bed—wait for me in the parlor. Be back soon."

Oscar was left in wonderment. Gimp hastened outside to the man who was leading away the horses.

"Hold on there!" he cried, "I want one of those—right off."

"One of these, sir?"

"Yes—quick! No time for fooling: get out of the road!"

"But they're used up, sir. Hadn't you better take a fresh one?"

"Makes no difference. Let go the bridle—rascal! Don't stop me!"

With remarkable elasticity he swung his corpulent body into the saddle, and then spoke to the tired beast.

The faithful brute, though worn to exhaustion by its recent labors, obeyed his voice, and away he went at a gallop.

The stirrups were too long for Gimp; but it mattered not—there was no time for arranging the buckles; and onward he dashed, grasping the pommel with one hand and the reins with the other, poisoning himself as best he could—entirely forgetful of the fact that he was bareheaded.

Before a room on the third floor, Vincent Carew paused.

"Go on, Dyke Rouel, and await me," he said.

Dyke obeyed, and Carew turned into the apartment.

On the privacy of a husband's grief, the villain intruded; he stood in the presence of Karl Kurtz, in the presence of death—and the dead one his victim.

The miserable man who went at the bedside, looked up as Carew entered; and, even in his wretchedness, a stern mold cast his features at seeing who the unceremonious comer was.

"Vincent Carew—vile man that you are! what brings you here?"

"Careful, Robert St. Clair!"

"Ha!"—with a start of fear. "What—why do you intrude upon me?"

"I am not dead yet, Robert St. Clair!" he hissed, while his red eyes flamed in rising anger.

"Not dead?"

"Nor am I to die by your hand!" and his voice was thick and mien ominous.

"By my hand! What do you mean by that?"

"Ha! ha! ha!"—a low, chuckling laugh to mock the echoes of a tombly cavern.

"Why do you call me Robert St. Clair?"

"Because I've found you out. Ha! ha! ha! No more; that will do. I only wanted to see if you are here. To-morrow—tomorrow! Ha! ha! ha!"

He withdrew abruptly, while the low, demon laugh was yet on his lips.

He was acting strangely, this being of atrocious deeds; he was not himself—some wild, crazing influence was upon him.

Slowly he walked toward his own apartment.

He found Dyke standing near the bed, pale and shivering. His eyebrows were twitching with spasmodic rapidity; his knees bent, and he looked at his master in a terrified way.

"Well, fool! what's the matter now?" demanded Carew.

"M—m—maester!"

"Out with it!"

"I'm almost afraid, good maester—I'm afraid you'll kill me!" stammered Dyke, in a woeful accent.

"Ha! you've discovered something?"

"Y—yes, maester—oh, Lord! I don't be angry! It wasn't my fault. You told me to leave it here, underneath the bed; you know you did, and he trembled and shook the more.

"The box!—the box! You mean the box? Dog!—tell me, quick—what has happened to it?"

"D-d-don't, good maester!—don't do that! It wasn't my fault!"

Carew clutched him by the collar, and was shaking him roughly.

"Speak, I say! Has any thing happened to the box?"

"Y—yes—oh, maester!—don't! I could n't help it!"

He was dragged to his knees, and Carew glared down upon him, while he gripped the terrified fellow in a painful hold.

"The box!" he cried, in a voice husky and savage.

"It's not the box, maester, but the thing that's in it!"

"H—al the scorpion?"

"Yes, maester!"

"Speak!—speak, or I shall kill you!"

"Don't, maester! I couldn't help it. You told me to leave it here!"

"What has befallen it?" nearly jerking Dyke forward on his face.

"It's—it's dead!"

"Dead!" Vincent Carew reeled back and struck his hands to his brow.

Then, with the purple of rage in his face, and the glower of a demon in his eyes, he cried:

"You lie, Dyke Rouel!—you lie!"

"No, good maester, I don't lie at all," faltered Dyke, as he shrunk before the dire gaze that fastened on him.

Carew bounded to a stooping posture by the bed. In a second he had torn open the cover of the box. He saw that his follower spoke the truth.

For awhile he contemplated the terrible thing—so trifling and pretty, and yet so deadly—and when he arose, his face was no longer red, but of a sickly white, and his eyes stared in a way half vacant.

"It has died," he uttered, thoughtfully.

"Yes, maester, that's it. The box was too close, and it smothered."

"Now then, to work!" arousing from his momentary reverie.

"To work, maester?" ventured Dyke, in

tremulous inquiry. "Why, what are you going to do?"

"To work!" came again from between tightly-locked teeth; and Dyke groaned as he drew still further away from his terrible master.

Carew laid off his coat and vest, and, brushing up the matted locks that fell upon his chalky forehead, advanced to a closet.

Here he took from a shelf a large stone chisel and a mallet.

"Secure the door," he said.

Rouel did as he was ordered, watching the other's movements in wonderment.

Striking the mallet several times against the wall, within the closet, he muttered:

"It must be as I divine. From the outside I have noticed five windows. There are two in my room; two in the room beyond. Then what means the fifth? Lorry's room is directly beneath here, and it has three windows—curse this wall! it is hard as rock. But there must be space on the other side—Ah!"

The mallet had sunk deep in the plaster; he had accomplished what he sought.

He had broken through the lathing. As he withdrew the tool, he made a further discovery, which caused him to exclaim:

"I thought as much! A secret room. The wall is not plastered on both sides, either. Little difficulty now."

"Maester—"

"Silence, Dyke Rouel! Come here, and lend assistance. Pull with me."

The two went to work on the wall, and soon forced an opening—Dyke gaping in astonishment at the proceeding.

Carew was first to crawl through. Though he had not used the chisel, he still grasped it firmly, as if there was still need of it.

"Why, maester, what are we going to do in here? It's awful dark!" stammered Dyke, as he also made his way through, in obedience to his master's whispered call.

"Be still!" ordered Carew, striking a match as he spoke, and glancing about him.

The first thing his eyes rested upon was the trap-door, near the center of the secret room.

An expression of satisfaction came over his face, and, groping his way in the dark—for the match quickly flickered itself out—he inserted his fingers in the massive ring by which the trap was raised.

But he paused. Something entered his mind at that moment, which stayed him in what he was about to do.

"Wait," he said, to Dyke. "Wait for me."

He returned to their room. It was some time ere he came back, and he brought an improvised rope—a bed-quilt torn in strips, and knotted tightly.

In the minutes that elapsed during his absence, he had done something else that procured the knotted strips. Dyke heard him mutter:

"She can not escape me! I have her! She shall swear not to marry Oscar Storms!"

"—yes, she shall swear it!"

"Maester—"

"Hist! Not a word. Here—can you find this ring?"

"Yes, maester, I've got it," as he felt around the floor, and finally touched the ring, on which Carew already had a hold.

"Pull, then. Gently. Make no noise, Dyke Rouel, or I'll strangle you!"

"I won't, good maester," said Dyke growlingly.

"Pull gently. Quiet."

Slowly they raised the trap. But, its hinges were rusted in idleness, and a slight, creaking sound ensued upon their action.

"Sh! Careful, Dyke. Easy."

"Easy it is, maester. Nay, if you wish, I'll not pull at all!"

The trap raised higher. Soon it was laid wholly back, and Carew peered down into the room below.

He saw Lorry standing at the door, with one hand on the knob, looking up at him.

"Be silent!" he hissed, shaking the chisel at her. "Cry out at your peril!"

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 133.)

## Mohenesto:

Trap, Trigger and Tomahawk.

BY HENRY M. AVERY,  
(MAJOR MAX MARTINE.)

XII.—Forest and Prairie.—"Alone."—In the Woods.—The Wolves of the Prairie.—On the Plains.—Scenery of the Prairie.—The Beauty of Nature.—The Plains in Winter.—Flowers.—From the Black Hills to Walla Walla.—Influence of the Prairies.

No one who has not at some time been alone in the wild-wood, surrounded by wild beasts and still wilder savages, can ever have realized that sense of utter loneliness which comes so often to the hunter and trapper, the guide or mountaineer. Often, indeed, have I sat by my lonely camp-fire, in the almost boundless woods of the British possessions, when the stillness would be so intense as almost to be felt; when I would seem that by putting forth my hand I could grasp the darkness as one would hold the gusts of snow. I knew, and could feel on such occasions, the full force and meaning of this little word, *alone*; yes, all alone with my God. Do not believe, kind reader, that I was the heartless, dare-devil scout and hunter then, as when mingling with my fellow-man. I never knew a mountain man who was not prepared to die. So I saw no danger where many others, unused to bloodshed, would have shrunk from the prospect before them.

Very often have I been awakened from a sound sleep, when my fire had burned low, by feeling the cold nose of a hungry wolf touching my cheek, and the feeling would send a cold chill through my body; but this feeling would be dispelled as soon as my camp-fire was blazing once more, and the incident would soon be forgotten in the sound sleep which an overtaken nature demanded. Nearly all mountain men are superstitious, to a great extent. Alone, hundreds of miles from the habitations of man, with no sound to break the awful stillness, unless it be the wind tearing fiercely through the tree-tops; the cry of anguish, so like a woman's, which no animal but an American panther can give; the howl of the gray wolf, or the timid, sneaking yelp of the coyote—all these are every-day experiences to that nondescript known as the trapper and hunter in the forests of the great North-west.

There are two species of wolves found on the western plains. One is small, called the jackal, or coyote; the other much larger.

The larger species are found of various colors, but most frequently gray. The color, however, varies with the season and often from other causes. Many of their habits are strikingly similar to those of the domestic dog, with the simple difference that the wolf is unclaimed from his wild state. The connecting-link between the prairie wolf and the domestic dog, is the cur found among the Indians. The Indian cur, by a casual observer, could be easily mistaken for a prairie wolf. Near the Rocky Mountains, and in them, these animals are found of an immense size; but, being cowardly, they are not dangerous.

The first night a person sleeps on a prairie is ever afterward vividly impressed upon his memory. The serenade of the wolves with which he is honored, is apt to be distinctly remembered. It is far from agreeable, and seldom fails to awaken unpleasant forebodings concerning the future; and the idea that these fellows may soon be clearing his bones, is not very genial to the fancy.

To the wolf, the graveyard is any thing but consecrated ground; and if a person is very chary of his cadaver, he had better not leave it on the Western Plains. The wolf is quite choice in his vands whenever the opportunity offers, and will at any time leave the carcass of an Indian for that of a white man. Old frontiersmen, speaking of the wolves, usually style them as "their dogs;" and after a night when these animals have kept up an incessant howling, they will express wonder by asking what has been disturbing "their hounds."

The flesh of the mountain wolf when cooked, has something of the smell and taste of mutton, but it is very rank. The Indians never kill them, believing that their ugly carcasses are inhabited by the souls of departed friends. When wolves are in pursuit of deer or antelope, they chase them in a circle, thus enabling a fresh pursuer to take the place of the weary one every time they pass the starting point. Fleetness falls a victim to cunning, and the poor antelope soon furnishes a feast for the hungry pack.

But it is not alone in the forest, with all its wolves, that I was so often impressed with the sublime idea of the immediate presence of my Maker. The same sense of loneliness, that same indefinable feeling of my own insignificance, would steal over me whenever, with my faithful pony, I would be on a tramp to better hunting-grounds. Crossing the plains and prairies, I would often forget that danger lurked in every bush, and see only the beauty of the scene, which moved like a living panorama before me.

Here was the prairie; God's own garden unprofaned by man. Beautiful it was, when the first beams of morning stole, with their effluent rays of light, chasing the dim shadows of night, and the mists of earth before them; decking each tiny blade of grass with gems of ever-changing hue; rousing the lark from her lonely nest, and gilding her wings with rays of brightness as she mounts exultant, to carol her matin lay at the gates of heaven; or seemingly reminding the stray wolf that his time to seek a hiding-place had come.

The greatest attraction of the prairie consists in its extent, its carpet of verdure, its soft, effluent rays of light, chasing the dim shadows of night, and the mists of earth before them; decking each tiny blade of grass with gems of ever-changing hue; rousing the lark from her lonely nest, and gilding her wings with rays of brightness as she mounts exultant, to carol her matin lay at the gates of heaven; or seemingly reminding the stray wolf that his time to seek a hiding-place had come.

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The greatest attraction of the prairie consists in its extent, its carpet of verdure, its soft, effluent rays of light, chasing the dim shadows of night, and the mists of earth before them; decking each tiny blade of grass with gems of ever





## TO A BOY.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

Stop, urchin, chasing butterflies  
Along the wayside funny.  
You have not learned yet life is brief,  
Nor yet that time is money.

You're having lots of pleasure now,  
There's many a good time waiting.  
You don't care how notions sell,  
Nor how mess pork is rating:

But, my young friend, there'll be a time  
When you will be a man, sir,  
Whether a noble one or mean  
Is more than I can answer.

Who knows you yet may utter forth  
Ecclesiastic tenets,  
Or you may walk a lower path,  
And deal in worldly peanuts.

It may be that you yet may lead  
The armies of the nation,  
Or you may lead a life quite low,  
And die in elevation.

You might become a president  
Aloof from petty foggeries,  
But it is quite as likely that  
You'll keep a corner doggerie.

You might be an astronomer,  
The course of planets watching,  
Or, haply fate may lead you to  
Dog-fighting and rat-catching.

You might be an M. C. and take  
A seat in Uncle Sam's house;  
Your aspirations may not reach  
No higher than the almshouse.

You may be Governor of the State,  
An honor to your station,  
Or, that your life to dissipate  
You'll plunge in dissipation.

Perchance you might be an M. D.,  
The noblest of the Century;  
It may be you'll retire from life  
And die in penitentiality.

Did you call me a fool? You scamp!  
I know what's your position!  
In life you'll be, without a doubt—  
A dirty politician.

## The Court of Lions.

BY LAUNCE POINTZ.

## I.—THE BEGGAR-ASTROLOGER.

THE midday sun shone hot and scorching on the courts of the Alhambra, and cast deep, black shadows under the long vistas of Saracenic arches, springing from light, graceful pillars, whose capitals blazed with gilding and mosaic of all the colors in the rainbow.

The interior of the Alhambra was dark and gloomy, as befits a fortress, which it was, in the days of the Abencerrages. Lofty towers, with frowning battlements, overhanging *echanquettes*, or watch-towers, flanking the curtains and dark rows of loopholes everywhere, announced the ever watchful presence of the Moorish soldier. But within, the Alhambra was a palace; if without, it frowned a fortress. Its courts were alive with springing fountains and waving palms. The very pavement was tessellated with colors of surpassing richness, and the colonnades, balconies, and latticed windows were all that the Eastern fancy of the Morisco could design of poetry and grace.

The sole shortcoming of the Arabs in respect to art was the total absence of imitation of animated nature. The Koran forbids it for fear of encouraging idolatry, and in consequence, in the single instance in which the law was broken, "The Court of Lions," the result, in the case of the stone lions that support the fountain, was decidedly archaic, if not grotesque. But the rest of the Court of Lions, aside from the fountain, is a marvel of beauty, in color and form, and even in its present ruinous state, has been the theme of admiration to artist and poet of every nationality.

In this court, nearly four hundred years ago, a young Moorish cavalier was walking impatiently up and down, in the shadow of the southern arcade, pausing ever and anon to listen to the tinkle and splash of the fountain, as if expecting to distinguish an approaching footfall louder than the rest.

The cavalier was young, and slender in frame, somewhat simply dressed, but with an air of scorn and haughty assertion in every attitude, that told him to be of exalted station in the court of the then reigning king of Granada, the sultan Bon Abdallah, better known as Boabdil. Every now and then he let his hand fall with angry vehemence on the hilt of his saber, and muttered an impatient curse on the laggard, whoever he was.

At last the sound of a slow, shuffling footstep was audible in the long arched corridor that led into the court, and a slouching, ragged figure, leaning on a staff, hobbled into the Court of Lions. The figure was that of an old man, bent with extreme age, with a greasy skull-cap on his gray hair, and a dark, cadaverous, over which his grizzled beard fell in front, nearly to his waist. The dark eyes, hooked nose, and large, sensual mouth, were all essentially Jewish, as well as the nobility of brow that dominated over the sensuality below, and makes the Jewish type so prominent in the affairs of nations, whenever not kept down by discriminating laws.

The old man hobbled to the center of the court, and sat down on a bench under a spreading tree, not seeing the cavalier, who on his part, had drawn back into the shadow at the first footstep, and now seemed as unwilling to advance as he had before been impatient.

He watched the old man for some time before he made a motion.

Helpless and inoffensive as the appearance of the other was, he was known, and superstitiously feared, far and wide, among the Moors, as the "Beggat Astrologer," Abraham ben Shimei. He was reported to be enormously rich, for all his beggarly appearance; and his knowledge of the stars was commonly asserted to be the fruit of communion with the Prince of Darkness.

After several minutes, however, the young cavalier seemed to pluck up courage, and putting on the regular court swagger, he stalked down the steps into the open space, and walked past the old Jew with a scornful air, one hand on his sword-hilt, the other on his hip. As he passed, he looked over his shoulder, with the haughty interrogatory:

"Well, servant of Eblis! what news from Gehenna?"

The old Jew shrugged his shoulders, and looked up with a gesture of deprecation. Something in his keen, dark eye, and the dubious smile on his broad, sensual mouth seemed to arrest the gay cavalier, for he halted in suspense while the other slowly spoke.

"Prince Hamet wished for news of the stars last night. To-day he wishes for news

from Gehenna. I have both. Which will please you, mighty prince?"

Prince Hamet started and turned pale, in spite of his swagger.

"I—I want what I asked for—last—last night," he stammered.

"I read the stars in my lord's behalf," said the astrologer slowly; "and I saw the Prince of Darkness on the summit of Mount Elboorz, in Circassia, at the same time. I have news from both, concerning my lord, good and bad. But my lord the prince will not compel a poor old man to incur danger on his behalf for nothing, surely," and the soothsayer held out a skinny hand, trembling with palsy and avarice, to the Moorish cavalier.

Prince Hamet hastily glanced round to see that no one was in sight; when he pulled out a heavy purse, and handed it to the Jew, saying, rapidly, in an undertone:

"Quick! quick! tell me all before we are disturbed! Will the Christian maiden try the pass? Will she be guarded, and by whom? Shall I succeed in my enterprise, and will Dona Inez become the queen of my harem? Speak, if there is truth in the stars! But, beware of deceit, Abraham ben Shimei, or, by the beard of the Prophet, whether I live or die, a thousand scimitars shall hack thee into shreds, as numerous as the sands of the sea-shore!"

Abraham ben Shimei smiled an evil smile, and his dark eyes glittered like those of a snake, under his bushy gray brows. "My lord the prince speaks angrily," he said, with a sneer. "He forgets that Eblis takes care of his own. All the scimitars of all the Moslems in Granada could not sway Ibrahim ben Shimei from telling the words of his master. I am but the spokesman of the stars, and the Prince of Darkness himself is my teacher. Let his be the credit of the words, and listen to the prophecy as it was delivered to me."

Something in the basilisk gaze of the old man seemed to awe the young one, for he became very pale, the sweat stood on his brow, and he trembled from head to foot as he listened. Prince Hamet was a brave warrior, and used to bear the brunt of a hard-fought day with the bravest, but the power of superstition completely quelled

him now. He had seen and become passionately enamored of Dona Inez de Castile, a beautiful lady at the court of the king of Arragon, where Hamet had once been an ambassador. So much was he infatuated, that he had resolved to carry off the senorita by force, hearing that she was about coming near the borders of Granada in traveling to a castle of her father's. It was to ascertain the state of the omens that he had retained Abraham ben Shimei, the beggar astrologer, and now awaited, trembling, the response of the oracle.

The grizzled soothsayer rose to his feet, leaning on his staff, fixing the young prince with his mesmeric glance.

Slowly and distinctly, shaking one skinny forefinger to emphasize the passage, he recited, or rather chanted, the following verses, Hamet listening in awe-stricken silence:

"When the scimitar's edge shines the point of the lance,  
When two shall drive twenty before them, like sheep,  
When the steed's stiff and stark, that was once won't to prance,  
And the saber cuts naught but the air in its sweep,  
When the maidens look on, and the warriors fight,  
When the steed of the north meets the steed of the south,  
Shall be proved all the worth of a lady's true knight,  
When the prey shall be snatched from the wild lion's mouth,  
And the maid shall belong to the brave cavalier,  
Who shall soar to the heaven that never sees fear."

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Rose Sinclair, quiet, statue-like, with her matchless hair which was her greatest charm braided and hidden away in a tight-meshed net, thought that this bright spirit might be a spirit of the sunshine, so incarnate of warmth and beauty, yet surrounded by an atmosphere of shadowy coolness.

"Oh!" cried Genevieve, stretching out her arms, laden as they were, "if I could only change this glorious flood of light into soul-inspiring wine, and quaff the golden nectar! The lovely summer-time; the bright-winged days, I can never be satisfied with drinking in their blissful sweets. What pity that life can't be made up of them!"

"What are you, a butterfly or a humming-bird, that you despise such matter-of-fact elements woven in as refreshment like this?"

Rose held aloft the little round willow basket she carried, crowned by a thick wreath of vine-leaves through which luscious blackberries glistened temptingly.

"Sweets fit for the gods! One of Mother Nature's happiest provisions for her loving, thirsting children. How could I resist such tempting fruit when plucked by fingers so fair? What am I, do you ask? Do you know what people call me, Rose, *pe-lie*?"

"People are ill-natured sometimes. I don't allow them to prejudice me."

"Then you have heard what they whisper. Just before I came here they were pitying that dear Miss Sinclair who was so taken with the little adventures. Ah, Rose, Rose! is it then so wrong to luxuriate in the rest you have offered me? To throw care to the winds and live in perpetual sunshine?"

"Oh, if there be a joy upon earth, it is this, it is this."

"Enjoy it then without a fear," said Rose, smiling into the fair, wistful face.

"But come, Genevieve, you will have opportunity of enjoying the golden glamour to the utmost in the long walk before us. For my part I wish the sunshine was a little less intense. The glare from the river will be intolerable."

"Oh, most prosaic of ordinary mortals! Come by the wood-path, then. It is further, but what of that?"

"Rob you of the coveted brightness?"

"It will keep for me. It's not a sacrifice, you may be certain. I don't think I could bear to renounce any actual wish of my heart—I never have, at least."

"And little fear of ever being put to the trial?" interrupted another voice. A pleasant, masculine voice, and the girls turned with a start to find its owner close beside them.

The little green scallop was dancing at the edge of the tide, as if impatient to break from its moorings and drift with the sparkling ripples. Its late occupant was the stalwart young man, whose white, aristocratic hands and easy poise, pronounced him at once of the wealthy city bred.

Genevieve uttered a little cry, half surprise, half unconcealed pleasure. Rose changed her basket to her left hand, and extended her right with a frankness good to see in this day of hypocrisy and affectation.

"Lionel! what an unexpected pleasure. How did you find us here?"

"By accident, simply. I was taking a sail while I waited for Reeves; we were coming to the cottage presently."

"Sailing under this sun," cried Rose. "It was hot, I confess," laughed he. "I wilted. Think of it; two miles to row back again, but I am pre-paid for all my exertion."

Genevieve's lashes flashed up and claimed the glance which was comprehending Rose. "Don't go," she said, coaxingly. "Come with us; Reeves will not remain long behind, you two are such inseparables. Persuade him, Rose."

He needed little persuasion it appeared; and the trio trod the golden lances which quivered athwart the broad shaded path they had chosen.

It was no stately summer residence, this cozy retreat of the Sinclairs. There were villas and wide-spreading mansions in sight, but this was a tiny gray cottage surrounded by lattice porches, overrun by clambering sweetbrier, and almost hidden by the dense foliage of clustering forest trees.

Genevieve dropped her fragrant burden on a bench in one of the dim, cool porches, and sent her hat spinning through an open window. Lionel stooped to rescue some scattered blossoms, while Rose passed from their sight into the cottage.

"Heart's-ease," said he, "but what can ease a heart that is willfully yielding to pain? Holding to truth, are we false because light has come to us? Which is better—to shut out the light, or prove recalcitrant to fixed principles and cherished hopes?"

He seemed rather communing with himself than addressing her. Genevieve dipped her hands like twin snowballs in and out of the mass of blossoms, reducing them to symmetrical form while she cast sidelong glances at him.

"All change is not falsity," said she, softly. "It is better, I think, to break any bonds which may retain us, than to cloud our lives by great mistakes."

The shifting lights in his brown eyes flamed more constantly under her shy, returning glances. Looking straight into his face, you would scarcely feel that he was a man to be implicitly relied upon. Honest enough at heart, but lacking that firmness which is as a rock of faith in a true man.

"What can I do, Genevieve?" he appealed to her almost helplessly. "If I cast off the old ties what can I depend upon?"

"Oh, silly man! Are you not content to escape from the snare?"

"I never wished to escape until I saw you."

She had finished her bouquet, and with the remaining blossoms wore a long slender chain. Turning, she met his imploring eyes, and hesitating for a second, flung the floral strand about his neck.

"Break it if you dare," she cried, in mocking gaiety.

"You know how proudly I would wear your chains—if I were only free."

Just then Rose appeared at the door, calling them in to lunch. She saw the appealing look in Lionel's eyes that rested so hungrily upon the dazzling vision of womanhood by his side, and it seemed to her that the brightness had suddenly gone out from the opening world. But still the sky hung serene and cloudless over all.

The undefined shadow lifted itself as the step of a new-comer rung over the gravelled walk, and Reeves sprang lightly up the steps.

Not so handsome as the other one, but with the light of a steadfast soul beaming in every line of his honest face.